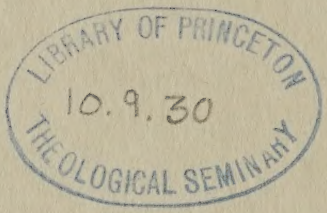


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# TEACHING FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

*A Practical Discussion on the Principles and Practice of Making a Curriculum for the Church School Which Shall Center in Life Experience*

By
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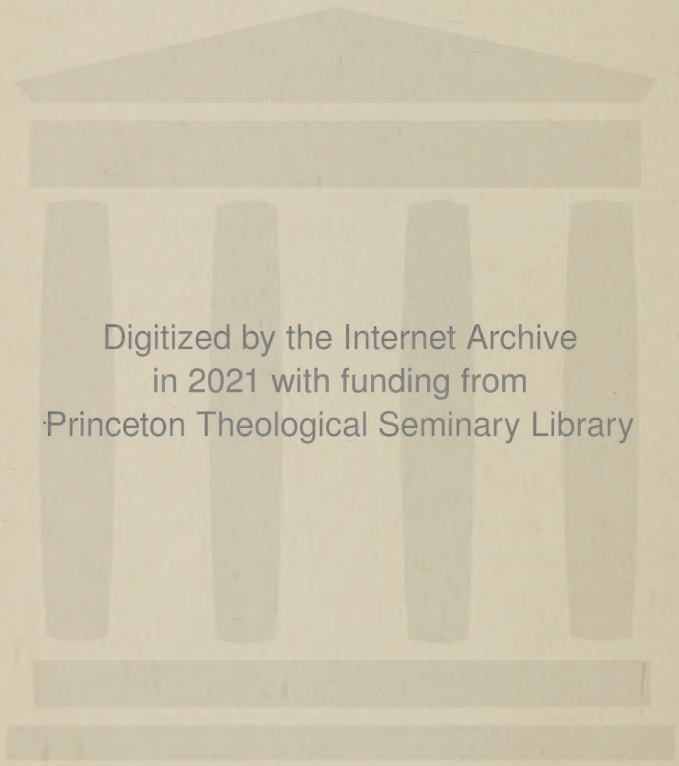
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## FOREWORD

This book has grown out of a desire to bring closer together those who are pioneering in educational thought and those who are engaged in the work of teaching religion in the churches throughout the land. Too great a gulf has been fixed between these two. Often the current of discussion in college classroom and professional meeting has been transmitted in its technical form to our average workers, without passing through the transformer of practical everyday usage, only to stun and confuse rather than to enlighten.

Our purpose is to help teachers and other leaders in the church school enter creatively into the process of making and using a curriculum of religious education. On the one hand they must understand and use the prepared courses which are provided for them, and on the other hand they must enter vitally into the experience of their groups so that these prepared materials may become instruments in a living, growing process of life-changing. The present state of unrest and change in the curriculum field makes this a time when it is particularly pertinent to place such a book in the hands of local church school workers.

The major content of this book consists of those general principles of curriculum-making which have been emerging during the past dozen years of educational activity. The chief contribution we would claim for it is its attempt accurately to represent to the worker not technically trained what has become common coin among the educationally elect.

Some have seriously raised the question whether technical concepts may be so expressed as to be clear to those not technically trained, even though written in monosyllables. The present writer would maintain that the underlying principles of present day education are not abstruse or difficult, but approximate very closely the dictates of common sense when seen in the garb of the language of John Doe. Whether we have succeeded in so clothing them the reader will have to judge.

We have tried not to sacrifice accuracy of interpretation for the sake of simplicity of expression. It is obvious that so brief a treatise cannot adequately cover so large a subject. The references at the end of each chapter are intended to lead the reader into further study. They have been selected with a view, on the one hand, of giving the more technical discussions on the subject, and, on the other hand, whenever available, giving such more extended popular interpretation as may be found in books and magazines intended for the average worker.

To name all to whom the author is indebted for encouragement and help in the preparation of this manuscript would in itself require many pages. Particularly should we like to express our appreciation to Miss Hazel A. Lewis and Harry C. Munro who conceived the idea of the preparation of this volume and gave valuable suggestions concerning content, to Hugh S. Magill for his constant encouragement and inspiration to highest effort, and to Luther A. Weigle, Harold I. Donnelly and Otto Mayer who have read the manuscript and made valuable suggestions.

PAUL H. VIETH.

Chicago,
Good Friday—March 29, 1929.

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## CHAPTER I

## THIS BUSINESS OF TEACHING

John Mason leaned back in his comfortable office chair. He closed his eyes, and mused for a quarter of an hour, heedless to the notation on his calendar that he had an appointment at that very minute. The door had just closed behind Mr. Snow, the superintendent of the Sunday school. And he, John Mason, had given his promise to teach a class! It had all come about so suddenly, he could hardly realize what had happened.

John had always been interested in the church. When he was a boy he had won a whole string of awards for regular attendance at Sunday school. Now that he was married and vice-president of Elmwood's most enterprising bank he did not go to church as regularly as he sometimes thought he should. But he believed in the church. His oldest son was in the Beginners Department of the Sunday school and the younger one was a member of the Cradle Roll. But to vision himself as a Sunday school teacher, as he had known teachers—that was beyond him.

What was this thing that had happened to him? He saw it more clearly now. Mr. Snow had said nothing of the needs of the Sunday school or John's Christian duty to the church. If he had, John would have been ready with a defense, for he had heard these things so often. What Mr. Snow did was to talk about the boys of Elmwood. He talked enthusiastically, "You know, Mr. Mason, we are not giving the boys of this town a square deal. Oh, yes, we have good schools.

But I am old-fashioned enough to believe that there is something which the public school cannot give them, for which the church must be responsible. Look at that bunch there now,'' pointing into the street, ''as fine a group as ever you laid eyes on. They should lead this town on to a new development—not only in material things but more important than that, in the drawing out of the spiritual resources. Yet what are we doing for them?

''We have a few of them in our church. The other churches have a few. Half of them are in no church at all. Our teachers, mostly women, are doing their best to teach our boys the Bible. But the boys are not taking to it strongly. They are restless, and will stop coming just as soon as the restraining hands of the parents are removed from them. I'll tell you, Mr. Mason, it isn't the boys' fault—it is the fault of us men who profess to be Christians but who are not giving these boys the chance they should have!''

Mr. Snow's voice had taken on an earnest note, and he was displaying a depth of personality which John had never thought he possessed. Looking squarely into John's eyes and placing a hand confidentially on his knee, he continued, ''I'll tell you, John, why I came in to see you. I want you to help shoulder the load of giving these boys a square deal—religiously. If ever a man was sent on a mission by God himself, I have been so sent. Come over to the church and take a bunch of these boys. We will give you all the equipment and support in our power. Do with them what you please, only keep the one aim before you: Give them that opportunity to develop religiously which they are now missing. Teach them the Bible? Yes. Engage

them in worship? Yes. But above all, do with them those things which will make them build into character a practical Christianity which will show forth in their everyday conduct, and give them a worthy motive around which to build their lives!''

John tried to refuse, in a half-hearted way. Somehow his stock excuses lacked power in the face of Mr. Snow's appeal. This thing had gripped him from the first. So he ended by promising to give the thing a try. And when John Mason undertook to do a thing, it would get done if it *could* be done!

During the month which intervened before John took up his active work, he did a great deal of reading, talking, and thinking—mostly thinking. He recalled his own experience in the Sunday school. He had always liked to go, and knew that he was eternally indebted to his teachers for what he had received. But somehow much of the teaching had meant little to him. Rarely did it help him in shaping his life. Applications were often made in class to the problems of today, but somehow they never seemed very real to him. On the other hand there were some experiences quite outside the lesson which had been of far-reaching significance. Such was that time when one of the fellows had poked a pun at the communion service and the teacher had quietly laid down his quarterly and with a new quality in his voice that held them all spellbound, had launched out into the most fascinating discussion they had ever had on the meaning of this sacrament, and why it is loved so much by Christian people. Another such incident was when they had gone camping, and the teacher, as the fire about which they were all gathered was dying to embers, looked up into the heavens so bril-

liant with stars and began without comment to quote, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork." A third incident he remembered so well was when that awful fire occurred early one Sunday morning on the east side of town and the teacher telephoned and told them to appear promptly at the church, dressed in overalls, for they were going to live their Sunday school lesson that day instead of talking about it.

John read much about teaching and about the purpose of religious education. He was greatly helped by the books on teaching methods, but much in them he could not understand. It seemed to him that there must be something vital at the heart of this thing he was to do, something profoundly simple, which, if he could once grasp it, would give meaning to the whole undertaking. How was he to guide the process of character development? What part must the boys themselves take in it? What relation does the teaching of the Bible have to Christian living in our day? After all, his concern was with what these boys might become, and his sole problem that of how he might best guide them in this process of becoming.

John Mason is not alone in facing this problem. Every year thousands of men and women take up work as teachers in the church school. They come with eager expectation of finding the joy of service in a great task. But alas, how few of them realize that joy! The few who do are richly blessed through this creative endeavor for the enrichment of the lives of others. Many, however, finding no satisfaction or success in the task drop out of it during the first twelve months. The remainder may go on from year to year, faithful to a

duty, but their work lacks the touch of the artist, and is consequently meager in results. It is not because so few are "called" to be teachers that the percentage of success among our teacher-recruits is so small. It is not because so few are intelligent enough to learn to be teachers. It is rather because so few succeed in getting at the outset a grasp of the simple elements of the task, through which the whole undertaking would be illumined.

### What Is Teaching?

Teaching is the finest of fine arts. It is more noble than painting, for the teacher does not represent his ideal on canvas, but makes it to live in the lives of men. It is more worthy than architecture, for the arches and pillars of a noble character will stand not simply for one or twenty centuries, but will last through the ages. It is more honored than sculpture, for while the sculptor works with inanimate stone, the teacher exercises his art with living material.

Living, growing personality is the objective of the teacher's art. This is what makes his task at once so difficult and so fascinating. It is difficult, because he cannot take this "material" and shape it to his own will. He can only supply the conditions under which it will develop according to the laws of its own being. It is fascinating, because to deal with growing life, and to have a share in guiding it toward the life more abundant is the greatest business in the world. The teacher of religion has the high privilege of working with the souls of boys and girls, not only to lead them to share in the work of the Kingdom of Love, but also to help them to reach out to ultimate reality and find themselves attuned to the Infinite.

Let us understand clearly what we mean by the term *teaching,* which occurs again and again in these pages. To the minds of many, to teach means to do certain things before a class. They make it synonymous with the activities engaged in by the person who is the teacher or leader. This is, however, a narrow interpretation. Teaching means much more than saying certain things in a certain way before a class. It means, in short, all the activities in which the leader may engage in order to produce certain results in the life and character of his pupils. With the present emphasis on self-activity in learning, the work of teaching will involve far less the things which the teacher or leader does before the class, and far more the activities in which he leads the pupils themselves to engage. If, for instance, it is easier to lead pupils into an appreciation of religious architecture by taking them into a great cathedral or church than by delivering a lecture on architecture, the teacher is just as truly teaching when he takes his group on this excursion as he would be if he had them grouped about in a classroom to hear his lecture. It is in this broad sense that we are using the term *teaching* here.

## Understanding the Underlying Principles

The fundamentals of the process through which personality is enriched are comparatively simple. The thing is going on about us on every hand. Boys and girls do not wait until they get into a school before they begin to learn. They are learning all the time. Our concern must be to make people conscious of the way in which learning may best take place so that it may be more successfully guided. Unless a larger percentage of parents and others who deal with children,

as well as church school teachers, can be led to recognize and master a few of the fundamental principles by which learning takes place, our progress toward a more Christian generation will be slow and halting.

The child-study movement has made great progress in recent years. Out of the investigations of the problem of how learning takes place, there have gradually emerged some basic principles of the learning process. There is much yet to be found out, but we already have much to begin our work on. If we are to develop artist-teachers, we must lead them to understand these basic principles on which successful teaching must be founded. Once let them grasp these principles, and they will be in a position to develop their own practice with a view to producing results. They will be free, with a freedom which is absolutely essential for the doing of a creative work. Only thus can they understand the organization of the school and the purpose of the lesson materials with which they are provided.

The modern physician is inclined to give his more intelligent patients some of the principles on which he is basing his treatment, so that the patients may cooperate with him. With others he simply leaves his doses of medicine to be taken according to directions, letting the patient remain in ignorance of why the magic cure is to take place. The latter plan may be effective, but it is not conducive to creative effort on the patient's part to recover and maintain health. It is by the latter plan that we have treated our teachers. We have supplied them with elaborate directions for doing thus and so, but have given them very little whereby to understand what they were doing. Small wonder that their success has often been very disappointing.

Has not the time come to try the former method for a while and encourage teachers to enter creatively into the process of education, rather than for us to do all the creative work for them?

It is our purpose in this little book to acquaint teachers with a few of the underlying principles on which education is based. We are writing for the average teacher because we believe the time has come when every teacher must understand something of the reason for the thing he is doing if he is to attain a measure of success. Let no one suppose that in so brief a treatment we can give a full account of the principles of education. We shall do no more than open the way for a new point of view for teachers of religion. If they will approach the reading of these chapters with a fair degree of intelligence and a large amount of common sense they will have no difficulty. Let this be followed by much thought and study in the same direction to develop more fully this point of view.

At no time has there been more uncertainty and change in the work of our church schools than at present. New standards are being adopted, old organizational requirements brought into question and new types of organization proposed, new building requirements discussed, and—most disturbing of all to the teacher—new lesson materials produced. Yet all this change is quite comprehensible when once we see the pattern about which it moves. The key to the understanding of this pattern is what we have referred to above as the principles of the learning process. If our teachers and officers are to work through this new situation toward a definite goal in Christian personality, without being lost in the maze, it is imperative that we give them a point

of view from which such understanding can result. Our purpose throughout will be to show teachers not simply the underlying philosophy but also to point out how it affects their work, and to lead them to visualize the richness of the resources which are at hand for the accomplishment of their goals. We shall maintain that in the details of application each teacher must be free to shape his means to the desired ends. Once let the intelligent teacher get a grasp of the objective toward which he is to strive and the laws under which realization may be brought about, and he may be trusted to work out the best means to that end.

## Some Definitions

In order that we may clearly understand each other throughout the discussion of the following chapters, it will be well for us to define a few of the terms which will be used:

1. *Curriculum.*—The key word which is used again and again throughout these pages is *curriculum.* We shall attempt here to give only a brief interpretation so that the reader may get started on the right track. As a matter of fact, this entire book will be directed toward a better understanding of this term. We would have chosen a simpler word if it had been possible to do so, but no other word has been coined which so fully expresses the idea we are after. Moreover, readers will come across it again and again in the literature of religious education. It is desirable, therefore, that we use it, with proper interpretation, rather than avoid it.

The study of the pupil reveals to us what he now is, and the manner in which he learns. The objectives of religious education give us a statement of what we want

him to become. The need for education arises from the fact that the pupil is not now what we want him to become. He must *change, grow.* This is what we mean when we say that the purpose of education is "to promote desirable changes." When we educate, we engage in life-changing, that is, bringing to bear on the pupil such influences as will promote growth toward the objectives which we have set up. In the broad sense of the word, all the experience of the learner which through guidance and enrichment is utilized to promote such growth constitutes the curriculum. In the accompanying figure, let *A* represent the pupil with his pres-

ent powers, experience, and capacity to learn, let *B* represent the objectives, then the line joining *A* and *B* will be the curriculum. It is the road which the pupil must travel in going from where he now is to the place which represents the goal of education. You who are his teachers and leaders are the guides to assure his progress in the right direction and at the best rate.

What, then, is the curriculum of religious education? The curriculum is the experience of your pupils, under guidance. It is their experience in the situations and activities which you select because of their possibilities for carrying your pupils toward the objectives of religious education. When this can be done through encouraging them to read a good book, that becomes a part of your curriculum. When you take your class on an outing that they may the better appreciate God's love and care as shown in his gifts in the great out-of-doors, that becomes a part of your curriculum. When

you make your pupils responsible for building and conducting the worship programs of your department, this activity becomes a part of your curriculum. The picture of "Christ Blessing the Children" which you hang on your church school wall may be a part of your curriculum. So also with your Bible stories, hymns, prayers. Once visualize your objective, and numerous doors will be opened to you through which its achievement may be brought about. Any means through which you consciously promote growth toward these ends is a part of your curriculum of religious education.

2. *Religious education.*—By the term "religious education" we mean education in religion as carried on by the Protestant Christian churches. It is true of course that the term might designate education in any religion. Much has been said in recent years looking toward the adoption of a more distinctly Christian name for what we are doing. Nothing has emerged, however, which is generally accepted. If we were to select an accurately descriptive title, we would suggest that it be "Christian religious education." This, however, is cumbersome. So universally has "religious education" been used to designate education in religion in the Christian sense, that we have decided to adopt it for this book. So long as we know what we mean by the words we use, we will have no difficulty in understanding each other.

Religious education seeks to interpret the experience of growing persons in terms of their relation to God and the implication of this relationship for individual and social living. It includes all processes which foster specific religious insights, feelings, attitudes, and activities. Religion should permeate all of life and not be

confined to a single sphere of activity which we call *religious*. Therefore religious education should see life as a whole, give religious content and interpretation to all aspects of experience, and comprehend the whole of life with ultimate meaning and value. All education may become religious when it lifts experience to the level of ultimate relationship to God. In the present discussion, however, we shall think of religious education from the standpoint of the religious school conducted under the auspices of the church.

3. *Church school.*—We should also understand clearly what we mean by the "church school." It has been customary to speak of the school of religion conducted by the church as the Sunday school. Gradually the term "church school" has been adopted, though many churches prefer to use the name "Bible school." In recent years the work which churches are doing in religious education has been expanded to include other activities besides those carried on during the Sunday morning hour. The vacation church school and the week-day church school have been incorporated into the program of many churches. Besides these there are many other activities which are educational in nature, such as mission groups, young people's societies, clubs, and others. There is a tendency to use the term "church school" to cover the entire educational program of the church, whether carried out on Sundays or week days. We are here using it in this broad sense.

In this first chapter we have attempted to get acquainted with the reader, to give a general view of the task ahead of us, and to interpret our "vocabulary." We are now ready to take up the various aspects of the curriculum and its use in the church school. Before we

can discuss these things intelligently, however, we must come to some understanding of the objectives which we are setting for religious education. This will claim our attention in the next chapter.

## PROBLEMS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Look up the word "curriculum" in an unabridged dictionary and note its derivation. Does this help you better to understand its use?

2. In your own church school, how many new teachers were enlisted during the past twelve months? How many gave up their work before the end of a year? To what extent was this failure to continue in their work due to a failure satisfactorily to understand the job in which they were engaged?

3. List the activities of your church which would come under the "church school" as defined in this chapter. Does your church so regard them?

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

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## CHAPTER II

## WHAT DOES RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SEEK TO ACCOMPLISH?

There are two things which determine what and how we shall teach—our conception of the *nature of the pupil*, and the *objectives* which we seek to attain. Upon these two hang the law and the prophets of education.

When it was thought that the mind developed through the training of certain "faculties," then education sought to give exercise in those faculties, such as memory, reasoning, judgment. It did not make much difference what was taught, so long as it was hard enough to discipline the faculties. When, on the other hand, education was thought to consist in the drawing out of the "powers" within the pupil, then materials and methods were chosen with a view to being of such interest as to stimulate these inborn tendencies. Again, when the mind was thought to be like a blank sheet of paper on which education might write anything it wished, much attention was given to "methods" of instruction. Today we make much of *growth* in character and *achievement* of personality, through the interaction of the pupil with the complex environment in which he lives. Educational method therefore revolves about the *experience* of the pupil and the ways through which enrichment and control of that experience may be brought about. We make much of needs, interests, motives, problems. Thus is teaching influenced by our conception of the nature of the pupil. Much of the discussion which is to follow deals with the place of the child in education.

That our *objectives* also operate to determine the what and how of our teaching needs scarcely to be proved. To make an electrician requires a different kind of training than it does to make a carpenter. A young man desiring to be a doctor receives different teaching from that of one who plans to be a lawyer. When the teacher wants Johnny to learn to *appreciate* Longfellow's "Psalm of Life" she does not proceed in the same way as when she intends that he shall merely learn to recite it. When the Sunday school teacher's purpose is to teach Mary the *content* of the Book of Acts she uses a different method from that used when her aim is to teach Mary her Christian duty toward her mother.

The learner is at the center of the educational process. It is the laws of his being which dictate the method whereby learning may take place. It is in terms of what we want him to become that objectives are stated. It is the difference between what he now is and what we want him to become which determines the changes which need to be effected by education. In this sense education is "child-centered." It begins with the learner. It sets up its objectives in terms of what the learner is to become. It proceeds according to the laws of his being. It tests its results in terms of what it has caused him to become.

## Why Do We Need Objectives?

The teaching of religion has often been ineffective because we have had no clear ideas concerning its goals or objectives. I have heard of a man who was looking among the branches of a hickory tree to find a squirrel which his dog had "treed" when his gun was accidentally discharged and to his great surprise the squir-

rel fell dead at his feet. But that is not the usual way by which squirrels meet their untimely ends. It is rather by the hunter taking careful aim upon the object of his desire. So too the teacher who would succeed must take careful "aim," but he cannot do this unless he clearly sees what his teaching is intended to accomplish. To inquire concerning objectives is an essential first step in undertaking any important piece of work.

The objectives of religious teaching indicate the direction in which it is to proceed, and the end for which it is to strive. As these words are written in New York, I have an objective to arrive in Chicago by a certain time. This objective gives me a basis on which to decide the manner and mode of my transportation. I cannot get there by going east (at least not in the time available!), I cannot get there by walking, I can make it only by taking one of a few trains which moves fast enough for my purpose. Once knowing my destination and the desirable time of arrival, I am in a position to count the cost in time, money, comfort, that will be involved in attaining my objective. Further, I have a very definite point against which to check my success in the achievement of my objective. When you teach in the church school you have the task of changing your pupil from where he is to where he ought to be in character and conduct. This you cannot do unless you know where he now is, and where he is to be taken. Unfortunately this is not so simple as moving physically from one spot in America to another. It is nevertheless true that the greater the clearness with which we visualize the goal, the better able are we to choose the right road and the right method of conveyance.

To insist on clarifying our objectives in teaching religion is but to insist that we be practical. When I was a boy on the farm, we used to engage in raising hogs for market. There were definite periods in a hog's life when certain objectives were uppermost. When the aim was to let him grow big in bone and muscle, we allowed him to rove in the old woods pasture, rooting for choice morsels under stones and sod, seeking acorns and nuts, wallowing to his heart's content in the puddles and ponds. That he grew lean and lanky did not worry us one bit, for it was size and not weight which was our goal. But when fattening time came, his movements were restricted to the narrow confines of a pen, and his diet consisted of good old Missouri yellow corn —all he could eat—and some wonderful concoctions which came in checkerboard bags. Will you pardon the homeliness of this illustration? If the farmer, by having an objective, knows how to give good gifts in proper season to his hogs, how much more should you, teachers of religion, strive to know *your* objective in leading human souls, and select your teaching in accordance therewith?

## What Objectives Shall We Set for Religious Education?

Not many months ago, our oldest boy started to go to Sunday school. That was a great day at our house! How eager he was for this new experience! How eager his parents were that it should be a great day in his life! As he walked along beside his father, he carried on a chatter of eager conversation. The spreading elms, the mock oranges resplendent in their garb of white, the birds in the trees—all had never before seemed quite

so wonderful. But when the church was reached an awed silence fell upon him. Here was his great adventure at last!

Even as our boy stepped across the threshold of the Beginners Department, so do thousands of other boys and girls each year begin their first formal steps in religious education. In the next dozen years they will receive from their churches practically all that they will ever receive in the form of organized religious teaching so far as its effectiveness in determining life habits and ideals is concerned. Is not this justification enough for us parents to ask, "What are you going to teach our children?" Is it not an undertaking of such importance that our churches may well ask again, "What shall we teach?"

To begin with, we shall look at this question from the standpoint of the more general aims, and proceed to the more specific a little further on. Jesus said, "I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly." John 10:10 One of the first things with which we must be concerned in the church school is to teach pupils to live. Unless the lessons help them to live more abundantly, they are but so much excess baggage and of little value. This is what is meant when we say that the teaching of a church school must be *life-centered.*

Many attempts have been made to state the aim or objective of religious education. Each has certain points of merit to recommend it. We might make a very good beginning by saying the aim of religious education is to teach your pupils to *live the Christian life.* A school of religion in a Christian church would presumably have this as its primary purpose. It is entirely in harmony with the Master's great command, "Go ye . . . and make

disciples, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." *Christian discipleship* is surely an ultimate end for which we must strive.

In his book, *How to Teach Religion,* published by the Abingdon Press, New York, Professor George Herbert Betts states the aim in teaching religion "in three great requirements which life itself puts upon the child and every individual:

"1. *Fruitful knowledge;* knowledge of religious truths that can be set at work in the daily life of the child now and in the years that lie ahead.

"2. *Right attitudes;* the religious warmth, responsiveness, interests, ideals, loyalties, and enthusiasms which lead to action and to a true sense of what is most worth while.

"3. *Skill in living;* the power and will to use the religious knowledge and enthusiasms supplied by education in shaping the acts and conduct of the daily life."[1]

Professor George A. Coe has offered a statement which emphasizes the progressive realization of the aim in the life of the pupil:

Growth of the young toward and into mature and efficient devotion to the democracy of God, and happy self-realization therein.[2]

The International Council of Religious Education through its committee on curriculum and its committee on standards has prepared the following comprehensive statement of aim:

The aim of religious education from the viewpoint of the evangelical denominations is complete Christian living which includes belief in God as revealed in Jesus Christ and vital fellowship with him, personal acceptance of Christ as Saviour and his

[1]Betts, Geo. H., *How To Teach Religion,* p. 47. The Abingdon Press.

[2]Coe, *A Social Theory of Religious Education,* p. 55. Used by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons publisher and owner of copyright.

way of life, and, membership in a Christian church; the Christian motive in the making of all life-choices, and whole-hearted participation in and constructive contribution to the progressive realization of a social order controlled by Christian principles.[3]

Finally, let us take a look at a statement of aim which has peculiar significance not simply because of its comprehensiveness but because of the fact that it was accepted by the meeting of the International Missionary Council at Jerusalem in the spring of 1928:

Religious education in the Christian sense includes all efforts and processes which help to bring children and adults into a vital and saving experience of God revealed in Christ; to quicken the sense of God as a living reality, so that communion with Him in prayer and worship becomes a natural habit and principle of life; to enable them to interpret the meaning of their growing experience of life in the light of ultimate values; to establish attitudes and habits of Christlike living in common life and in all human relations; and to enlarge and deepen the understanding of the historic facts on which Christianity rests and of the rich content of Christian experience, belief, and doctrine.[4]

As general statements of aim, these quotations represent the best thinking in religious education. They do little more, however, than point us to the direction in which we must go. A process which is so intricate as the teaching of religion needs more specific guidance each step of the way. When aims are made very general you can do almost anything under them—from memorizing Bible verses to coloring outlines of flowers—and maintain without fear of successful contradiction that you are within the limits of your objective. We must be more specific in our demands on the church

[3]*Proposed International Standard for the Vacation Church School,* p. 15. International Council of Religious Education.

[4]Weigle and Oldham, *Religious Education,* Report of Jerusalem Council Meeting I. M. C., 1928, p. 4.

school. We must state in more concrete terms what we mean by Christian living or Christian discipleship.

To say that we must be more specific in our statements of objectives is not to criticise those objectives which have been quoted. It is simply a recognition of the fact that we must go beyond them in our analysis of the elements involved in Christian living. The writer recently undertook to make such a more detailed analysis of the objectives of religious education. A study was made of practically all that has been written on religious education, and notes made on every passage which referred to objectives. These statements were carefully compared and organized, and yielded an extended and comprehensive list of objectives in fairly specific form. The entire report on this study is to be published as a separate book.[5] All that our space here will permit is to give the seven main headings about which the material organizes itself, and indicate in the discussion of each what specific meanings are to be attached to it.

1. *Consciousness of God and relationship to him.*— There will be those who will say that this is nothing new, that we have always aimed at this result. But have we succeeded in realizing our aim? Too often not. We have taught *about* God, but we have not always succeeded in giving the pupil an *experience of God.* You cannot substitute *telling* for the child's own experience. Anyone who lives with a child will know that his everyday experiences and questions present abundant opportunity for the kind of guidance which will lead to *discovery* on his part.

[5]Vieth, Paul H., *Objectives in Religious Education.* To be published in the fall of 1929.

David was eagerly helping his father plant the tulip bulbs for next season's flowers. "Little brown brothers" he called them, because that is what they were called in a poem that he loved. But he could not understand how these brown bulbs could lie quietly all winter, and then spring into life. This led to an explanation of how God has put a germ into these bulbs, which under the influence of sun and rain will grow into a plant. Later we read with him a poem containing the lines

> "Down in your heart, little seed,
> Don't you know,
> God put a wee germ,
> To help you to grow."

This marvel of nature has never ceased to thrill him, and it has brought him nearer to understanding God.

An instance which reveals the sense of reality which a little child may have of God is recorded by O. E. Rolvaag in *Peder Victorious.* It illustrates also the motivation for right conduct which in Peder's life grew out of his conception of God as desiring him to do the right:

> Over in the cupboard stood a sugar-bowl, which Peder knew about. Whenever he was alone in the room and happened to remember the sugar, a most unreasoning desire to have a lump might come upon him. He was lucky indeed if he remembered God in time, for then he left the bowl untouched. Having resisted the temptation he would seat himself on a chair, and remaining seated for some time, would nod secretively as if to One who knew exactly what he was thinking about. And sometimes he would nod to that Other One as if to assure Him that He need never doubt his honour. Peder then felt very virtuous and his face brightened. On the other hand, it sometimes hap-

pened that Peder forgot and then his fingers went into the bowl and brought out not only one but even two lumps. Then suddenly sensing what he was doing, he would become much offended with God for not reminding him in time, or for not taking him by the arm and leading him away as Mother would have done. . . . Still, it was immeasurably pleasant to be on good terms with God, and to have Him always at his side.[6]

These illustrations are drawn from the lives of little children. I do not intend to leave the impression that discovery ends with the first dawning in the mind of a child of the existence of the Heavenly Father. Every growing personality must discover again and again new riches of spiritual reality in the universe. One of the saddest things of life is that all too often discovery does stop with childhood and men and women go through life with a God suited only to the comprehension of a little child.

Margaret Slattery has given us a charming story to illustrate the limitations of the child mind to grasp the full truth of what later will be crystal clear:

Last fall when the harvest moon was full and hung so big and round and low in the sky, a little eight-year-old went to the post office with me. As we walked along he suddenly looked up. "See, the moon is following us," he said, "it goes right along as fast as we do." I explained that the moon did not really move along with us, just looked as if it did. He did not believe it. When we reached the office, pointing his small finger straight at the tower he said in most convincing tone, "There's that moon right over the tower; it did follow us, look!" I shook my head but said nothing. There was nothing I could say. We went home, the great shining ball following us all the way, and when I left him at his door, with glad triumphant voice he called out, "Look, look at it! There it is right over your house; it came back with us again."

[6]Rolvaag, O. E., *Peder Victorious*. Harper and Brothers, New York: 1929, pp. 4-5. Used by permission.

When he went in, I stood looking up at it, so bright, so still, so near. I knew that it was far, far away; that it was cold and dark, shining only with borrowed light. I knew I told the child the truth. I knew it did not follow us. I knew how to explain the delusion—but I could not explain it to him. He was so little, so limited, his knowledge was so meagre, there were no words, no terms, no medium through which I might give my knowledge to him. For several years yet the moon will follow him up town and return with him. But little by little, step by step, I shall teach him, until some day he reaches the place where I can explain it all, and have the joy of seeing the light break over his face, and hear those words a teacher loves, "Oh, now I see." Then I can open his eyes to new mysteries and teach him again to "see." And so he grows.[7]

The increase in knowledge of the world and of life, instead of leading to a disturbance of faith, should rather lead to an enlargement of faith. All too often, the disturbance of the youth's faith as he begins to comprehend the teachings of science concerning a universe of law and order is due not so much to the teaching of science as to the way in which we have taught religion. Not simply should the pupil's conception of God and his relation to the world keep pace with his conception of the universe, it should rather *lead* that growing knowledge of the world. Only thus can youth be ready to assimilate each new truth into his religious conceptions, and see in it a greater glory of God. It is true that some teachers of science may at times be arrogant and anti-religious. The only safe antidote to the influence of such as these is a religious education which is so vital, so effective, and so broad that these strains on faith will be anticipated before they arise.

[7]Slattery, Margaret, *Living Teachers.* Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1910, pp. 28-31. Used by permission.

Happily there are among scientists today as well as among religious leaders, many who visualize the essential relation between science and religion to be one of harmony instead of conflict. Says one of these:

> The theologian must use the scientist's description of physical phenomena as an aid in discovering the higher values of life. It is the business of theologians today just as it was the business of Moses, Elijah, or the Christ, to take the best description of the physical world, which the keenest observers and most rational thinkers of their day could offer, and to give to that description the spiritual interpretation needed that men may properly evaluate the forces operating in the universe. The development of theology is therefore intimately related to the expanding knowledge of the material universe which has marked the more recent evolution of man.[8]

But discovery is not enough. Out of the conviction that God *is,* must grow attitudes of faith resulting in love, dependence, trust, submission, gratitude. Every child should learn to know that experience of joyful personal communion which is the privilege of a child with his father. Man does not simply stand afar and admire the Being whom he calls God. He lives in the conviction that he can hold communion with him. It must therefore be one of the objectives of religious education to foster such practice of communion. Such communion comes not only by withdrawal from the world, but also through the sharing of God's purposes and work through righteous living and service to humanity. Education is not *religious* if it does not succeed in giving the pupil this consciousness of the presence, power, and love of God, this joy in communion and fellowship with him, and this sense of sharing with him in his work for the world.

[8]Mather, Kirtley F., *Science in Search of God.* New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1928, pp. 45-46. Used by permission.

2. *An understanding and appreciation of the personality, life and teachings of Jesus and a conscious acceptance of him and loyalty to his cause.*—When we discuss Christian religious education, it is almost unnecessary to say that we want the child to learn to know and love Jesus. It is only through him that we may know the Father. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father, but by me."[9] "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."[10] It is only through Jesus that we may catch a vision of a Christian world.

Yet we do well to emphasize this specifically as an objective. All too often we must confess of teachers of religion, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him!" While we have professed to teach Jesus, we have not actually succeeded in the case of many of our pupils in fostering that love and loyalty of him and his teachings which discipleship demands. Our ambition may outrun our practice, but even so, it were better to strive for a high objective even though failing in its fullest attainment, than to have had no objective for which to strive!

It is not possible to formulate any group of statements which would fully encompass all that Jesus should mean to teacher or pupil. An attempt at formulation, however, will help to clarify our thinking:

*a*) We must help our pupils to find in Jesus that personality to whom their supreme loyalty may be given. In him may fulness of life be found, giving a criterion of value for the life of the individual Christian. His early followers called him Master and Lord. Even so shall his followers today call him Lord if as teachers

[9]John 14:6.
[10]John 14:9.

we succeed in bringing them into vital contact with his personality and life. He has also been called Saviour. Men have found that through faith in him they may be saved from baseness and sin, and lifted to a higher plane of life. We do not talk so much of sin today, but sin is yet a very real fact among us. How shall our children be saved from sin, except we show them a Saviour?

*b*) We must lead our pupils to find in him the true moral and religious ideal. In him may we find the guidance to right conduct, as well as the motive for right conduct. But the ethics of Jesus can never be described by the term *mere* ethics. Always his moral principles grow out of his consciousness that "one is your Father, even he who is in heaven." And this is religion. "Education becomes religious only when it is conscious of the presence, power, and love of God as the ultimate condition and supreme motive of human life, which includes and integrates all lesser values and motives whose proximate end is some form of human welfare," says Weigle. Our children cannot learn too early that God must be found in their fellowman as well as in the hidden recesses of their souls.

*c*) We must lead our pupils to find in Jesus the true revelation of God. It is surprising how little we know of God except through Jesus. We teach the child that God is like Jesus. With his increasing ability to comprehend, let us continue to lead him to the Father through the Son. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself."[11] Jesus shows us the joy of frequent communion with God. He shows us a

[11]John 7:17.

life so lived as to be constantly attuned to the Infinite. He shows us a filial submission to the will of the Father which is not weak dependence on the guidance of another but active sharing in the creative work of God. He teaches us of a God who is concerned in human welfare, because he is a God of love. In short, Jesus reveals God through his own matchless personality, and through his perfect relation to the Father. It is the privilege of every teacher, through Jesus, to reveal to his children the Father.

"What will you do with Jesus?" is a question which parents may eagerly ask concerning their children as they stand on the threshold of the church school. It is a question which the church school must help decide during those fifteen or more years of childhood and youth. As for me, I want the answer which my boy makes in word and deed as he passes through these years to be,

> "Jesus, thou strong son of God, I take thee as my Lord, I look to thee as my Saviour, I cling to thee as the most perfect example for my moral and spiritual life, I find in thee and through thee that experience of love and fellowship with God which leads me too to call Him *Father.*"

That is a great responsibility which I am laying at the door of the church school. Will it be equal to the task? Answer, teacher, and in answering, bear in mind those boys and girls who are yours because fathers and mothers have committed them to your care!

3. *A progressive development of Christlike character.* —Character is not something to be once attained and then enjoyed forever. It is the result of a process of continuous growth. We judge a person's character by what we see him do when he faces moral situations. If he consistently refuses to defraud another, we say he

is honest. If he is always willing to give to worthy causes, we say he is generous.

In developing Christlike character we must seek to develop within our pupils the ability and the desire to interpret moral situations in terms of the life and teachings of Jesus. Character is the result of much experience under the guidance of Christian leaders. It is the teacher's business to bring God into the consciousness of the child as one who has an interest in the decisions he makes in moral situations. The teacher must lead the child to see his life in relation to God's will for the world, and show him the meaning of righteousness in terms of a life lived in harmony with this holy will. Thus does religion become a vital factor in his conduct. Much as the wise teacher and parent may do to guide the child in his achievement of Christian character, there is no short cut to the child's own facing of problems and making of decisions. He does not learn true obedience by being forced to obey, any more than he learns to write by having an older hand guide his own in the formation of letters. While on many occasions it may be unavoidable to dictate the child's conduct, let this be done in clear recognition of the fact that growth in character does not result until decisions are made on his own initiative and responsibility.

Here lies the strength and the danger of education. Parents and teachers must place at the disposal of the young their own more mature experience, but they must not substitute their decisions and choices for those the child must make for himself. He must be led to recognize the authority of those who by position and merit are worthy leaders, without surrendering his own divine right of self-determination. Weigle expresses

this thought in his little pamphlet *Home Training and the Problem of Authority* as follows, "We want to help our children to become individuals capable of standing on their own feet before God and man, free, responsible, efficient, with initiative and resource, yet reverent, obedient to authority, and imbued with the spirit of good will and of service."

Christlike character consists in responding to the situations of everyday life according to the way of the Master. The range of such situations may be from such an incidental matter as buying a newspaper to such a momentous one as choosing a life vocation. Every waking hour there is a need for making decisions of more or less importance, and consequently the temptation for choosing the lower way rather than the highest. No system of education can give the pupil a solution for every problem which he must face. It can, however, give him practice in meeting in a Christian way certain typical situations of many varieties, give him certain principles which have grown out of experience in such situations and which may serve as a guide for the future, and help him to establish a dominant Christian motive as a guiding star in shaping his life.

While education must be given in present-day situations, it has a constant reference to the future. We must not be satisfied in the attainment of our objective when we have succeeded in teaching our pupil what is right conduct today. We have seen too clearly already the havoc which may be created when people try to live morally in twentieth century situations with ethical conceptions which were intended to fit the nineteenth. Kilpatrick has pointed out to us in his book, *Education for a Changing Civilization,* that perhaps the

best we can do for each new generation is to give them a *method of attack*. If we help them to recognize the significance of moral situations which they face, to bring to the evaluation of these situations the principles on which righteousness must rest, to interpret the teachings of Jesus in a new day, to develop the habit of acting when once the right course is clear, then we will do more for them than if we try to supply a ready-made solution for every situation which they may face.

Christlike character rests on a foundation of knowledge. While knowledge of moral principles does not assure right conduct, the reverse is also true that much wrong conduct is the result of shortsightedness and ignorance. The church school must give the pupil a thorough grounding in the principles of Christian ethics. Good psychology as well as good common sense will dictate that principles must be taught on a background and foundation of pupil experience. Only thus can they have meaning. To separate learning and life at this point will be disastrous. The laboratory method is just as essential in teaching religion as in teaching chemistry—and the laboratory is life.

With moral knowledge must go a passion for righteousness. Only the life which is definitely committed to the service of Christ will bring forth the fruits of the spirit. In our desire for direct experience in actual conduct we are apt to overlook the important part played in life by the *emotional* and the *belief* aspects of character. Our church schools have been remiss in helping their pupils in the development of a positive Christian faith. Such faith must of course be fashioned out of experience. Should we not expect young men and women who have gone through the grades of our

church schools to be able to give a reasonable account of the faith which they confess?

Christlike character will not be achieved without its ups and downs. There will be times when the young Christian will experience failure and defeat. The higher his spiritual ambition, the more this will be true. Yet here, too, lies an opportunity for the teacher of religion. Should he not help his young disciple to recognize sin when he falls into it, and what is much more important, show him the way to the Saviour who is able to deliver him from its bondage? The New Testament has its prodigal son as well as its Timothy.

4. *The ability and disposition to share in the building of a Christian social order.*—While it may be said that we shall have the good society when we have a generation of men and women with Christlike character, it may as truly be urged that the development of Christian individuals is dependent on the Christian community. We must definitely set our minds to the task of growing a Christian world. No child is too young for lessons in world brotherhood.

The fatherhood of God implies a respect for life and personality which is fitting in a brotherhood of man. From earliest infancy the child is open to the subtle suggestions resulting from his parents' attitude toward others. Do they speak of other persons by disrespectful names? Do they make sport of those who are different? Or is there that genuine courtesy and respect which is becoming to Christians? These attitudes will leave their imprint on the consciousness of the child.

The family is the first society of which the child has experience. It becomes his model society. Upon it we proceed to base our teaching of what God is, for we

say he is like a father. Upon it we base his ideal for the larger society. Gradually he pushes out into the larger groups—the school, the community. As each new enlargement of horizon takes place, new opportunities are presented for an expansion of the meaning of brotherhood.

There are two aspects to the task of realizing this objective of the development of the Kingdom of Love. The first is that of building into the lives of boys and girls the best knowledge, the highest ideals, and the soundest habits of conduct which have yet been worked out in the application of the social gospel. Our dreams are yet far ahead of our achievements. The second is that of implanting that divine discontent which will forever re-examine our present practices and ideals in order to find a better way of living. The world is ever in need of the prophet.

Let us not suppose that we can solve for our pupils all the social problems which face the world today, even though it were educationally desirable to do so. In many cases we can but pass on our own dissatisfaction with what is, and a mode of attack which gives promise of a Christian solution. What will we do with war? With the race problem? With the building of the Christian family? With the economic question? Let religious education take for its task the development of pioneers who will face these questions in the light of Jesus! We are now practically ignoring them.

5. *The ability and disposition to participate effectively in the life and work of the church.*—We have called the religious school "the school of the church" but how little it has done to perpetuate the church's own life and efficiency! Yet if the church has a mission to ful-

fil, how important it is that we prepare members who can forward that mission. If the church is not all that it ought to be—and few of us would maintain that it is —how important that the next generation be trained to make it better!

A well-balanced course in religious education should result in an understanding of the church's origin, history, and purpose. Such a perspective will lead to a proper evaluation of what the church is and does in the modern day. The pupil should be given an acquaintance with the church's program in the world. This should take particular account of the program of the Christian religion in all its phases, with a fair share of consideration for the missionary enterprise. There never was a time in the history of the church when there was greater need to acquaint its members with its missionary purpose, the problems which present themselves in the pursuance of that purpose, and the results which are accruing from this endeavor. Such an education in the purpose and work of the church should lead pupils in religious education to a wholehearted desire to share in this great enterprise. It should early convince them of the fundamental unity of purpose in all churches, and pave the way to such broad interchurch sympathies as will lead to a realization of the Master's prayer "that they may be one."

But let us not be concerned solely with the church in the broad sense. The individual's experience is after all in the local manifestation of the church's work, a single congregation. Our church school has failed if it does not give to the church a steady stream of efficient churchmen. Every student in the church school is potentially a church member. The school must seek

to make them "thoroughly furnished" to do the work of that church, to contribute to its support, and if necessary, to remake its program of work so as to lead to a more effective spiritualizing of the life of the community. It staggers the imagination to think what would happen in Kingdom work if every new member coming into the church from the church school were informed, trained, and enthusiastic to do its work!

Nor is this hard to do. The church is an ever-present factor in the pupil's life. It is a part of his experience from early infancy. It offers an excellent opportunity for direct education. We need but to take the pupil into our church life, and let his church education be an interpretation and enrichment of the experience which he already has all about him.

6. *A Christian interpretation of life and the universe and the development of a Christian philosophy of life.*— If religious education is worthy of its name, it should be able to lead the pupil through to the building of a constructive Christian faith in this age of science. Recognizing that in early life an interpretation of the world must be given which can then be understood, we must guard against the extreme danger of allowing that interpretation to stand as adequate. We must make sure of its growth parallel with the growth of the child's power to comprehend. The question which religious education is called upon to answer is nothing less than "What is the meaning of life?" Jesus has an answer to make to this problem, in the light of which every youth must come to his own answer and shape his life accordingly.

The problem created by the fact that there is sin, sorrow, disappointment and evil in the world will sooner

or later be faced by every person. Why did not God create the world entirely good? It is the business of religious education to help each pupil in making his own answer to this question. We teach the little child that God made everything good in his time. But he soon discovers that there are bramble bushes and mosquitoes, as well as flowers and beautiful birds. He learns that the righteous suffer, as well as the wicked. What will he do with these facts in a world under God's care? Too often our failure to bring the pupil face to face with this problem under Christian guidance has led him to throw overboard the sum total of his faith when the shafts of adversity struck him full force. There may be no entirely satisfactory solution to this problem of evil. There is decided gain, however, in looking at it from all standpoints in the light of Christian teaching.

Christian faith is firm in its conviction of the ultimate triumph of life's highest values. It insists that the universe is friendly to man's highest ideals. It offers the youth a purpose around which to organize his life which will lead him to see all lesser values in their right perspective. Such a Christian philosophy of life is based on our faith in the nature and will of God on whom our destiny depends. Unless religious education can bring boys and girls to the conviction of the ultimate truth of this faith, it has little to offer to which they may anchor their lives in the face of the beckoning of money, pleasure, and other appeals with their promises of sure and early satisfaction.

A Christian philosophy of life concerns itself with the ultimate conservation of values. The conviction of continued existence after the death of the physical body

is thoroughly ingrained in us all. What are the grounds on which this hope may reasonably be based? Religious education should seek to help each boy and girl to bring to the solution of this problem the best Christian philosophy, and help him to work out his own faith in the conservation of values.

7. *A knowledge of the Bible and other religious heritages of the race.*—Throughout the preceding objectives it is assumed that the Bible is an indispensable source of inspiration and guidance. We do but re-emphasize here the importance of making it truly a possession of the pupil. He should learn to know the Bible as a book, as well as hiding its message in his heart as a guide to conduct. Further, the Christian youth of today should not remain ignorant of the outstanding contributions to civilization of other great religions. Such knowledge will lead him to love and appreciate his own religion the more.

Though the Bible has always been the chief textbook of the church school, very few of our pupils have really learned to know and love it. Just at present there is a wholesome emphasis on the practical use of the Bible in life situations. Such use assumes a familiarity with its structure and contents. It will lead to a better learning of the Bible itself than has resulted from our more traditional methods. Moreover, the Bible is more than a rule book of conduct. It is well worth the knowing for its own sake. Religious education has not done its full duty to the Christian religion if it has not succeeded in making the Bible an open book to everyone whom it teaches.

Our religious heritage is by no means limited to the Bible. Great works of religious art, religious archi-

tecture, religious poetry, hymns, should all claim the attention of the student in religious education. The history of the Christian church and the movement of Christian thought should come in for their share of attention. The geography of the lands where the scenes of religious history are laid, particularly the land out of which the Bible grew, should form a part of the knowledge of the Christian. From the Christian heritage he should move out to the contributions which the non-Christian religions have to offer. While education is more than a passing on of the heritage of the race, if religious education as a part of its work does not succeed in making every Christian reasonably familiar with this great heritage, it is pertinent to ask the reason why.

### Objectives and the Curriculum

The purpose of the foregoing discussion is to show the broad lines along which the objectives of religious education should move. The descriptive paragraphs have indicated somewhat how each may be broken up into smaller units. As a matter of fact no one can make a satisfactory analysis of objectives for any particular teacher or school, because the specific statement of such objectives must grow out of individual need. To state that we aim to develop Christlike character is to deal in general terms. If your task in the church school is to teach a class of boys, to develop Christlike character will require that you direct your endeavors to such specific things as: fair play in sports; helping mothers in the home; giving fair work for pay received; helping to provide wholesome playground conditions for younger boys and girls, etc. These specific objectives are apt to get us lost in details if we allow them to get separated

from the general objective of Christlike character; the general objective becomes abstract and impractical until applied in such specific and concrete cases.

These objectives have been discussed from the standpoint of the curriculum-maker. They represent the goal of his endeavor. The learner, however, must also have objectives if learning is to take place in a normal way. Whole-hearted, purposeful activity results when there is a goal in view toward which he is striving. The objectives of the curriculum-maker should so far as possible become the objectives of the learner. The best learning situation results when teacher and pupil agree on a common purpose to pursue as their objective, and share in the enterprise which leads them out in the spirit of fellowship toward its achievement. Objectives should always be tentative and progressive. Each new achievement should be but a step toward a larger and higher value visualized by pupil and teacher in this co-operative endeavor.

We have all seen the effect on life of a great dominant purpose. In a sense, men usually achieve that which they most desire. When the objectives of religious education become the great organizing centers around which young men and young women build their experience, and in which they fix their criteria of success, then an important step toward the attainment of these objectives has been taken.

If these objectives here set forth be accepted as a working basis for arriving at a statement of the goal of Christian religious education, we are now prepared to proceed with our discussion on how to use a curriculum. Our task consists of bringing those influences into the lives of our boys and girls which will lead us

to an attainment of the ideals here set forth. How we may discover the needs of our pupils, how we may best meet those needs, how we may test our results by the goal set up—these, and other similar questions will occupy our attention throughout the remainder of this book.

## PROBLEMS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Ask each of three teachers to give you a statement of the aim of his lesson last Sunday, in terms which are just as specific as possible. Compare them with the outline of objectives given in this chapter. Under which heading do they fall?

2. Distinguish between the objectives of religious education and the objectives of education in general. How far can the public school do what we have outlined above as the objectives of religious education?

3. You will have noted that the quotation from Betts on page 27 is quite unlike the other statements of aims quoted. Would you regard this as being a fundamentally different point of view, or is there a way in which they may be reconciled?

4. As a teacher was walking to Sunday school one morning, he saw three of the boys from his Junior class snowballing the girls who came by. Does this incident suggest an objective which this teacher might set for his class? How would you state it? How would you go about attaining it?

5. Have a talk with some child of your acquaintance and draw him out on his ideas about God. On the basis of conceptions which are revealed through this conversation, make a statement of specific objectives which the teacher of this child might set up under the heading of "relationship to God."

6. What relation does the department service of worship hold to the objectives of religious education? Which of the objectives in this chapter, if any, does it help to attain? How?

7. One afternoon when the supervisor came to the church for the week-day church school, he was amazed to see the Primary class planning for an outing in the park. The teacher assured him that this was a regular part of their work. Which of the objectives of religious education might be attained by means of a picnic?

8. What is the value of a motto, as for example, "*I serve*"?

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## CHAPTER III

## TEACHING AND LIFE

Two teachers of young people were working in a certain Sunday school. Both were competent men, and conscientious. The one taught the Bible with all the art of pedagogy which he had been able to master in his long experience. He explained, questioned, discussed, and drilled. Students who came under his tutelage did not leave him until they knew well the section of the Bible covered by his lessons.

The other approached his task very informally. He spent much time with his class through the week. He *displayed* none of the arts of pedagogy. His method was to begin with some problem which he knew to be real to his class—race conflict, sportsmanship, boy and girl problems, life work. There was no drill on Bible content, but it was to be observed that Bibles were much in evidence and frequently consulted in this class. Some questions were held open to be reported on at subsequent periods. Students frequently remained after the period to consult the teacher privately.

Years passed. The students in these two classes have gone into many walks of life. A canvass of the first class would reveal little remembrance of either the teacher or his lessons. But the members of the second group bear witness to a frequent going back to those early days for guidance in the present. Somehow that teacher did something to their lives which has not been effaced by time.

What is the difference between these two teachers? The answer is, the first was concerned to teach a book, while the second found the center of his work in life.

## The Meaning of Life-Centered

The term "life-centered" is very commonly used in present-day religious education. It stands for a certain philosophy of education. Like many another term, however, it is prone to be merely a *word* and not a symbol for a fundamental idea. Thus it becomes a sort of shibboleth with those who are supposed to know education. It gives a semblance of profundity and impressiveness to their utterances. But to the unitiated layman it may become a stumblingblock, more mystifying than revealing. Yet, rightly understood, the idea back of the term "life-centered" will profoundly modify our work in the church school.

When education is life-centered, it grows out of the experiences and needs of the learners and in turn influences their lives, to make them more Christian. It must grow out of life interests and needs, or it will have no meaning for the pupil. It must lead back into life or it will have no value. It must give that enlargement of knowledge, deepening of attitudes and ideals, and fixing of habits, through which the pupil may be led into the desire and the ability to live in a more Christian way. When teaching takes place at the point where need actually exists, there is no difficulty about its either having interest and meaning for the pupil or influencing his conduct. Thus, when a girl is faced with the question of going with her crowd in a matter of which she does not approve or losing her popularity with them, and comes to her mother for advice, the

guidance her mother gives her is at once an outgrowth of her situation and a guide to her further conduct.

It is this struggle to get a close relation between life needs and teaching that is at the bottom of many of the developments in modern education. The life interests and needs of any growing person are many and varied, and consequently call for a rich and varied education. Not every lesson will grow so directly out of a felt need of the pupil as in our illustration. Often the pupil may not at the outset be aware of his own needs or his latent interests. It may be necessary to initiate activities which will open before him new and enlarged experiences. But the point of view remains the same, that in some vital way the teaching of religion must grow out of and lead back into life experiences. We have no grounds for hoping that children will have learned that which they do not practice.

The principle of centering teaching in life lays a wholesome emphasis on the development of personality. We have good authority for placing the highest value on the human soul. This means that we must enter into the lives of our pupils and share their needs, their interests, their purposes. Such teaching cannot be done from a book. It requires life-sharing. Dean Weigle has described this essential nature of teaching as follows, "Teaching takes place wherever there is fellowship, involving communication, whereby the more mature and experienced members of a group lend counsel and aid to those who are less mature and experienced. The most elemental of the qualities that go into the making of a great educator are a capacity for fellowship; the ability to reveal to his fellows new horizons, deeper insights and higher goods; and the power to

stimulate them, not only to vision and grasp, but to initiative and good will.''[1]

Teaching exists for the sake of life, and not life for the sake of teaching. Its purpose is served when it has helped its pupils to live more abundantly. All life is a process of learning. From the cradle to the grave we are constantly gaining new knowledge and learning to do things in a better way. Many things are learned outside of schools. We want to go to a new section of the city. We do not go to school to learn about streets and numbers. We simply ask the policeman on the corner and he gives us our directions. The next time we want to go to the same place we will know the way. So with learning to know the best store to trade in, the right coal for our furnace, the best batsman in the National League. Out-of-school education of this sort is always life-centered. It is acquired only because there is first of all a need or an interest in life which must be met.

But out-of-school learning is haphazard. Sometimes it is inaccurate, and very often it is inadequate. Extensive as is our experience at eating or at the purchasing of clothes, witness the atrocities committed at the lunch table and the clothing counter! To offset these shortcomings of education, society has established schools. It is willing to pay the price of setting aside certain of its members who shall give their time to the work of teaching the young. It is their business, in some organized fashion and in the most economical manner, to lead children into the knowledge and experience by means of which they may live life most effectively,

[1]Weigle, Luther A., "Jesus Christ, Educator." *The International Journal of Religious Education*, September, 1925, p. 9. Copyrighted by the International Council of Religious Education. Used by permission.

and perchance vision new ways of living and moving and having their being which may be better than any yet conceived.

This business of establishing schools to educate the young was a stroke of genius. But unfortunately the school has a tendency to substitute things to be learned for living itself. It was soon so far removed from life that it was difficult for the pupil to see the connection between learning and life. It gave much attention to the results of human experience as recorded in books, but little attention to the experience of the present as found in life all about it. The history of modern education is largely an account of the effort to bridge the gap between the school and life.

Take the case of the church school. You who are reading these pages are no doubt teachers or officers in some such school. We discussed in the preceding chapter the great life values toward which religious education should strive as its objectives. We emphasized the point that these values are to be realized through the development of personality of individual boys and girls. Such growth of personality takes place at the point where these young people are actively engaged in the business of living. Yet here you are, scheduled to meet these pupils for a brief time on Sunday morning in a department assembly or classroom, and guide them in the development of Christian personality. How are you to touch them at the point at which they are really living? How avoid dealing in wares which are meaningless for their lives? How assure that you will lead them into that richness of experience which will really result in the more abundant Christian living? Of one thing we are certain. Unless your teaching makes such

contact with life, it will have no appreciable effect in the development of Christian personality. How you may touch those pupils at the very points where they are most alive, discover their religious needs and help them to produce such changes in life and conduct as will meet those needs, is the theme of this entire book. It lies at the heart of the problem of a life-centered curriculum.

The present emphasis on a life-centered curriculum of religious education grows out of a dissatisfaction with the results which have been achieved by religious teaching. For a long time we have been saying that book-learning is not enough. The attainment of knowledge as an end in itself is not the aim of education. Pupils learn to do by doing. We must go beyond instruction to the development of attitudes, ideals, purposes which have their fruition in character and conduct. Consequently we are eager to embrace the new emphasis which gives promise of larger results.

### How Will This Principle Affect Our Work?

We stated above that this ideal of a life-centered religious education would profoundly affect our work in the church school. There are two changes in our attitude toward our work which will follow the acceptance of this principle:

1. *The way in which we conceive our ends.*—It will shift our emphasis from things *learned* to character *achieved.* We will not inquire, "How may we teach these lessons to our pupils?" but rather, "What are the needs of our pupils which may be met through these lessons?" or better still, "What are the needs of these pupils for which we should plan lessons?" The test of

our work will not be the number of Bible stories and facts which our children may remember, but the changes which have been effected in the pupils themselves toward the more abundant Christian life.

A story in a recent issue of the *American Magazine*[2] illustrates this emphasis on changes produced in the lives of pupils as the aim of religious teaching:

> On a sunny Sabbath morning in mid-winter, a bishop was walking down Michigan Boulevard, Chicago, bound for his church. Suddenly, an expertly-aimed snowball whirled through the air and sent his "topper" flying, a hopeless wreck. He turned to see a ragged urchin making a hasty get-away.
>
> "Boy," the bishop cried, "Come here!"
>
> It would be hard to say what caused the boy to obey. But he did. And, strangely, he was not greeted by a scolding, but by an arm pleasantly thrown about his shoulders, and with a heart-warming smile.
>
> "My hat furnished you a first-rate target," said the bishop; "Now, will you do something for me? I want you to come to my Sunday school!"

The story goes on to tell how this ragged street-urchin did go to Sunday school with the bishop that very day, how the bishop and he became lifelong friends, and how this influence brought about a complete change in the boy's life. He determined to make something of himself. By almost superhuman effort he succeeded in gaining an education. He became a nationally-known figure. For this boy is now Dr. Herman Bundesen of Chicago, one of the foremost fighters for health in this country. In the meantime two of his pals who were newsboys with him in those early days but did not come under the influence of the Sunday school, have piled up records of crime, and are now both serving life sentences for

[2]December, 1928.

murder. Dr. Bundesen himself says, "I'm satisfied that if it hadn't been for that incident (of the bishop's hat) I'd probably be where my chums are—behind the bars! I was headed that way."

Everyone would say that this is supreme proof of the success of that Sunday school, at least with this boy. We do not ask how well he learned his lessons, or how well he can remember them. We only ask, "What did he become?" The bishop knew how to center his teaching in life!

Yet, let us not assume that the lessons of this school were not important. It is through the influence of the curriculum of this school in its broad aspects that the change in life took place. Note for instance, the evidence of successful religious teaching in the following statement of Dr. Bundesen, "When I went into office, I resolved that I would never 'play politics' or in any way compromise my honesty. I did this *because I believe in God and have a religion.* . . . I believe that any man who compromises with honesty denies his religion and his God."

This is the first way in which a life-centered curriculum will affect our work, it will fix our eyes on life values as the goal of our teaching. It is true that this is not a new idea. The development of Christian character has long been the goal of the Sunday school curriculum, in the mind of a few of the leaders of thought at least. We must now make it the ideal of every teacher! Our results have fallen too far short of our purposes. We may have had our *purpose* fixed in life, but our *method* has not been adequate to the achievement of that purpose. The new curriculum seeks to introduce a method adequate to realize the purpose.

2. *Our conception of the way in which life changes are brought about.*—A life-centered religious education lays emphasis on learning to live by living. The laws of life by which learning may best take place must be observed if we would succeed in our teaching of religion. We have often heard it said that we learn to *do* by *doing.* Let us give it a wider application. We learn to live in Jesus' way *by living in Jesus' way.* Does this sound like a paradox? Let us examine it more closely.

A father desires that his boy learn to play basketball. As his teacher, I may proceed in one of two ways: I may get some books on basketball and teach him all that science has learned about this great sport—the size and composition of balls, the height and size of baskets, the ideal curvature for a ball to drop into the basket most easily, the chances of successfully throwing a ball into the basket from various angles and distances, the mathematical computation of the velocity with which a ball must hit the backstop in order to drop into the basket on the rebound, ways of eluding one's guard, the heroic lives of great basketball players. All these things, and many more, I may teach him so that he will understand all about basketball. Then he will be ready to fare forth and *play,* and I can betake myself about other business.

Or, on the other hand, I may take him out to the court, put a ball into his hands, and urge him to *play.* After he finds through experience that to make a basket is a difficult art, I may teach him something about the science of basket "shooting"—the velocity and rotation of the ball, the height of the arc it describes, the chances for success from various positions on the floor. I may

put him through most arduous drill in the practice of handling the ball. If the playing of the game has inspired him to a desire to play better, he will gladly impose upon himself the necessary practice periods. I may show him how he can pass the ball more successfully and elude his opponents more easily. I may commend his most successful plays and urge him to use them again. I may inspire him to desire greater perfection, or shake him out of too easy complacency with his own performance, by taking him to see expert players perform or by asking him to read about the great players of the world. I may impress upon him certain rules for successful playing, as they grow out of his own success or failure in playing.

By which of these methods will my pupil learn the more readily to play basketball? Do I hear a chorus of "By the second"? Is it any different with learning to play the game of life? Yet, who will deny that in the church school we have been using the first method in teaching our pupils to live?

### Experience Under Guidance

A life-centered curriculum is built on the second plan. From a body of subject-matter to be acquired, it is shifting the emphasis to an ongoing experience in which growth may take place. The former seeks to go *from* knowledge to experience. The latter begins with experience and leads *to* knowledge, attitudes, habits, skills, which may in turn be used in guiding the learner in new experience. The emphasis is shifted from more adequate knowledge to a firmer *control of experience.*

Schools have spent millions of dollars to establish laboratories in which students may gain experience in

the use of chemistry. A school of the Christian life has its laboratory all about it in the everyday conduct of its pupils. How shortsighted we have been not to recognize this vast laboratory, and use it!

At this point some one may say, "If experience holds such a central place in learning, what is the use of schools? Why not just let the pupil learn from 'experience'?" Let us hasten, therefore, to remind the reader that mere experience is not education. "A burnt child does dread the fire, but a child with a stomach ache does not dread the unwholesome food that produced it. 'Experience' at the dining-room tables often results in wrong dietary habits that even maturity regards as right. 'Experience' as a parent can fix upon the mind the most futile and injurious conceptions of parental authority—it has done so in multitudes of cases. 'Experience' as a teacher fastened upon us a kind of school-teaching that we are now struggling, with enormous effort, to free ourselves from. . . .Accumulation of experience or of years is not of great inherent significance; neither is the lack of years. What is important is the way in which we deal with experiences as they arise."[3]

In our illustration of the boy who was learning to play basketball, let it be noted that he was playing *under guidance.* His teacher did not simply tell him to play. He taught him, *through playing,* not only to develop an interest in playing, but also to *desire* to play better and to *learn* to play better. Education in Christian living is best accomplished through Christian living under guidance. Thus may the experience of

[3]Coe, George A. *The Motives of Men,* 1928, p. 197. Used by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, publisher and owner of copyright, New York.

maturity be placed at the disposal of the immature and lead them into greater fulness of life.

The words enrichment and control are used to describe this work of guidance. Through *enrichment* the pupil is led to see the deeper significance of his life-situations as they relate to other considerations and values in his total life experience. Religious education should seek to enrich life experience in terms of religious significance and eternal values. These values include both the broadening of human contacts and fellowships, and the deepening of experience as it transcends the human and includes God in its relationships. Successful enrichment of experience should result in developing in the learner the power to *control* his experience toward the achievement of Christian conduct and character. Control of experience results from the ability and disposition to find in situations the response which is most nearly Christian, and to direct conduct toward that desirable response. The enrichment of the experience of the learner is most successful when it leads him to achieve an increasing measure of *self*-control.

That learning has not really taken place until the pupil can *live* what has been taught him is readily recognized in practical life. The business man insists on *experience* on the part of those whom he employs. So also with the superintendent of schools. Patients come slowly to the young doctor, and clients to the young lawyer, because the patients know they lack experience. The newer education seeks to close this gap between learning and experience. It includes clinical work as a part of the doctor's course of training. It teaches business method by having students engage in business transactions. Will religious educators learn that they

may close the gap between the school and life by having their pupils learn the business of living by leading them into actual experiences in living and helping them work through to Christian outcomes by such guidance as teachers can give?

A study of the teaching work of Jesus will reveal that it was always concerned with life, and most generally given in life situations. How far the present-day church school has departed from the example of its Master teacher! "Jesus was, in the supreme sense of the term, an educator. His seeming lack of system was due to the fact that he was consistently engaged, not in imparting subjects, but in teaching men. And his method of teaching men was to give himself up to them in unstinted friendship, to live with them day by day, and to speak to them naturally, without forcing and without reserve, as occasion arose and opportunity presented, concerning whatever aspect of eternal truth he saw that they most needed at that particular time and place. In the language of present-day discussions of education, Jesus' procedure was pupil-centered rather than material-centered. He went about the work of teaching not as though he had a certain body of material which he must transmit in a proper, predetermined order to his pupils, but rather with a clear recognition of the fact that here were living, active persons whom he might help to growth in understanding and in grace."[4]

### How Carry Out This Ideal in the Church School?

This brings us to the heart of the problem of making a new curriculum which will center teaching in life.

[4]Weigle, Luther A., "Jesus Christ, Educator," *International Journal of Religious Education*, September, 1925, p. 9. Copyrighted by the International Council of Religious Education. Used by permission.

We are agreed that we are to find our objectives in life values. We are to deal with life itself. The teacher is to be the guide and assist the learner in so facing life's experiences, so directing and enriching them, that they may grow continuously more Christlike. Granted the desirability of all this, how are we to carry it out in actual practice in the church school? That is a problem which will bear consideration from many angles. For the present, at the risk of repetition later, we shall look at the question from two possible approaches, in order that the reader may visualize the application of the foregoing discussion before leaving this chapter.

1. We may make the school itself an experience in Christian living. The pupils engage in fellowship with each other and the older members of the church. They engage in worship and other activities. They have an experience of the church and its services. They have a relation to the property of others and of the church-group. All of these relations offer an abundance of opportunity for enrichment of experience.

Then there are certain activities which may be initiated which have great potential educative value. To teach pupils the meaning of worship, and the ways of making worship programs, we may have them plan and conduct the services of the church school. To teach them the meaning of law and order, and the experience of following the lead of established officers, we may adopt pupil self-government. To teach them Christian service we may lead them out into projects of service, such as participation in a White Gift Christmas. To give them a more intimate acquaintance with the Bible we may follow their natural eagerness to know more about this marvelous book, particularly if this interest

is stimulated by presenting them with Bibles as they graduate from the Primary to the Junior Department. Throughout such enterprises there will be need for adult guidance, and abundant opportunity for an enrichment of experience. The newer type of curricula seeks to lead teachers in launching such enterprises with their pupils, as for instance in planning for a welcome to new pupils, preparation for a *giving* Thanksgiving, and the like.

2. We may make the school minister to the *felt* needs of the life outside the school. Typical of this way of learning is the case of a mother who has certain child-training problems, and goes to a lecture on parent-problems to get help. She does not actually carry out her child-training in the lecture room, but the process is life-centered for her none the less. We have all had the experience of receiving tremendous help for our everyday lives from reading, or from listening to lectures and sermons. Let it be borne in mind, however, that in these cases, the mother has a problem centering in life and we found the book or lecture valuable because they fitted our needs or interests. The power of the successful minister lies in seizing on the life situations and needs of his hearers, raising them to the level of consciousness, and giving them that stimulus which will lead them to want to do something about it.

The great teacher is he who, from all the possible things that might be done in school, can select those which will fit into the experience of the pupil so as to be of the most lasting value. Having determined his values, he is further the one, if he be a great teacher, who can so engage the pupil in activities growing out of his educational purposes that they will find school

not a drudgery carried on away from life, but a charming bit of life itself. He will see much further than his pupils. What to them may be but "something interesting to do" to him is an answer to a child's need, and a promise of life enrichment and spiritual growth.

In planning to make the teaching of the church school center in the life needs of boys and girls, some difficult problems will need to be solved. One of these is that of finding the pupil's situations, problems, interests, and needs. Another is that of giving proper guidance in the situations which may have been discovered. These will be touched more fully in the following chapters. What we have tried to accomplish in this chapter is to give a point of view with respect to character growth and how it may be affected by teaching.

## PROBLEMS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. List a few of the things you have learned outside of schools. List beside them a few things learned in school which would probably never have been learned if they had not been made a part of the course. Which were learned the more readily?

2. Have you, since leaving school, set yourself the task of learning anything just because you wanted to broaden your experience, even though you had no immediate need for it? How successful were you in carrying it through?

3. Is there danger in unduly narrowing our education if we insist too strongly that it meet life needs? On what grounds would you, under this principle, teach Mother Goose Rhymes? The Psalms? "Partial Payments"? The Acts of the Apostles?

4. Think of the best teacher you ever had. Why was he "the best"? To what extent did his work follow the principle discussed in this chapter?

5. In what ways would you proceed to meet the life needs revealed in the following situations?

*a*) Children who are careless with their school books with which the school has entrusted them.

*b*) A pupil tells a story of how a boy on his street got even with one of the crowd across the tracks.

*c*) A class in sixth grade has heard of the destitute condition of some families in the lower end of town and wants to prepare a Christmas basket for them.

*d*) A class in which each child wants first paper, sharpest pencil, prettiest picture, seat next to teacher, etc.

*e*) A boy in the Beginners Department whose center of interest seems to be in trains.

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

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## CHAPTER IV

## DISCOVERING AND USING LIFE SITUATIONS

The effort to center teaching in life has led to an emphasis on "life situations." Like so many other styles in dress or thought, the term has become a present-day fad. One can scarcely listen to a discussion on curriculum or method without hearing it again and again. The word does, however, cover a fundamental meaning which no one who has to do with religious education can afford to overlook. The meaning goes to the very heart of the curriculum of religious education as at present conceived.

### What Are Life Situations?

The term "situation" is one taken from the psychologists. They speak of "situation" and "response." The situation consists of all the factors which at any moment cause one to act. The response is the resulting action. The action may be described as physical, mental, or emotional, though all these factors are present in a complete act.

An example of a very simple situation is that of a child in the presence of a bright object. His response is that of grasping the object. Should there be present in the situation a strange person, the child may become afraid and pay no attention to the toy but cry instead. As an example of a more complex situation, take the one in which I am at the present moment placed. The elements in my situation are such physical items as a room, a desk, a typewriter, some paper, notes, and other

objects of which I am more remotely conscious. But these alone do not lead to the response I am making. There are some factors in my situation which cannot be seen and heard by the physical senses. Such, for instance, is my vision of the printed page on which these lines will eventually appear, my mental picture of those who will be likely to read these words, my consciousness that this particular portion of the task must be completed today. These and many more are the factors to which the response is the writing of this paper.

We are responding to dozens of situations every hour. Sometimes they are as simple as the one of the child and the toy. Again they are so complex as to concern us for days and weeks, as when a young man is required to decide whether to go to work or go to college.

Let us go a step further and inquire as to the meaning of the adjective *life* in the general term "life situation." What makes any situation a *life* situation? Our first answer would probably be, a life situation is one which happens in actual life as opposed to those artificially set up in the schoolroom. But have we not tried these many years to make the school *real* life, and are there not many situations within the school itself which are truly life situations? The obvious answer to this query is affirmative. Perhaps we will then say that a life situation is one which actually happens, as contrasted with imaginary situations. But are not many imaginary or "vicarious" situations nevertheless life situations for the child? Professor Edwin H. Reeder of Columbia University contends, in a recent article,[1] that they are, and uses the following suggestive illustration:

[1]Reeder, Edwin H., "What Are Life Situations?" *Teachers College Record,* February, 1928. Used by permission.

Some time ago, the *Saturday Evening Post* published a picture depicting in one corner a boy of about fourteen years of age with his eyes—and his mind—buried in a book. Between this part and the remainder of the picture was a shaded line denoting that the major portion of the painting represented the imaginative content of the boy's mind. This latter part showed a knight clad in full armor, carrying a lance and pennon, mounted on a prancing steed with a fair damsel riding *en croupe* behind. The face of the knight was the face of the boy who was reading. The real life situation of the lad at the moment did not include the room, the hassock on which he was sitting, the clothes he wore, nor the book he was reading; his life situation was identical with that of the knight.

The real distinguishing mark of a life situation lies, not in the situation itself, but in the attitude of the child toward it. To quote again from Reeder, "A life situation is one of which the child recognizes the significance and meaning to him." It is one which has to do with the business of living. It is one which will readily compel the child's interest and attention, with little or no teacher compulsion. Learning the names of the brothers of Joseph is obviously not a life situation, for such a performance can have only the most remote meaning for life. Learning the proper Christian attitude toward a Chinese lad who is about to enter our class is, on the other hand, a very real life situation. Yet even the former may become a life situation if the information is desired by the child for use in a play he is writing—or even because of sheer inherent interest in the story—while the latter may become perfunctory and academic if made simply a discussion in Christian ethics apart from a real Chinese boy.

### Some Pitfalls to Be Avoided

Before leaving this interpretation of the meaning of life situations, we shall pause to point out three pitfalls

which should carefully be avoided. The first of these is the temptation to interpret the meaning of situation as covering only actually present physical factors. The situation created for a boy by the plan of his gang to rob an orchard, is but one type. Just as surely is this boy responding to a life situation when he is trying to understand the meaning of God in his life, or when after a study of the life of Jesus he whole-heartedly takes upon himself the vows to become his loyal follower and helper.

The bloodiest battlefield of life lies in the inner recesses of the soul, and the battle may be raging hottest when there is the greatest outward calm. Perchance there may even be some decoy physical activity to hide the smoke of the battle which is within. Unless we accept this broader view, we will tend to rule out from our curriculum some of the finer religious values and interpretations.

A second pitfall to be avoided is the assumption that the use of life situations requires us to deal *only* with projects which can be initiated and carried through under the guidance of the school. To be sure, there is a very real place in our program of religious education for such enterprises in Christian living. But there are also many situations which lie largely outside the religious school to which it may contribute by way of interpretation and control. This is inevitably true if we think of religion as being concerned with the whole of life. Thus the youth who is earnestly facing the investment of his life may best have his life needs served by a careful study of Christian life callings—even on the basis of what has been called a "content" course. A systematic study of the life of Jesus or of the prob-

lem of the future life may at times be the best way in which life needs can be served. Let us be sure, however, that we give first place to discovered life needs, and select courses to meet those needs and constantly hold them to their purpose.

A third pitfall to be avoided is that of thinking of life situations as being only momentary "snap shots" of experience. Such for example is this:

James's mother asked him to go to the store after the groceries. On his way he met John on his new roller skates. "Come and go to the store with me," called James. John readily accepted. As they were walking along the vacant lot on Maple Street, they saw a black object in the grass. When they stopped to see what it was, they found it was a pocketbook. "Bet some of the kids are trying to fool us," said John. But James decided, "Anyway, I am going to take a chance and see what is in it." To their surprise and delight, they found a five-dollar bill in the purse. "Oh, boy!" shouted James, "think of the candy that will buy!" But John said, "This money is not really ours. We ought to try to find out who lost the pocketbook."

Much of the work done under the general term of life situations has concerned itself with this snap-shot variety. Such situations have undoubted value in teaching. A record of many such cases is very revealing concerning the lives of a group of children or that of a single child. But there are also great trunk lines of experience which according to the above interpretation are just as truly life situations. Such, for example, are a boy's hobby, a man's vocation, a youth's desire to go to college, his ambition to make the team while in college, a girl's love for the boy of her choice. True, we could perhaps discover these trunk lines of interest if we had a complete record of the brief units of experi-

ence, but it is just as true that these larger organizing centers of life give meaning and value to the briefer units of experience.

### Life Situations and Religious Teaching

Any response which we make to situations which are consciously faced results in experience. This in turn influences our response to new situations. Thus are we a part of all that we have met. Other things being equal, the value of the experience resulting from meeting a situation, as guidance in new situations, depends on the extent to which our choice of response was consciously made. The degree to which the response is consciously made depends to some extent on the different lines of conduct which are present in the situation, and the strength of our desire to respond in more than one direction. When the one desire of our heart is to go to the seashore, then there is but that one thing to do when we are at leisure for a holiday. But when the situation presents equally strong desires to spend a day's holiday in reading, at the seashore, attending the theater, or visiting a friend, then we may spend hours debating it. Take, for example, my own situation in writing this chapter, to which I referred above. On the one hand is the desire to do a creditable piece of work and to complete it today. On the other hand there is a whole group of factors tending to pull me away from my desk—the music which I can faintly hear from the radio downstairs, the opportunity to enjoy the fellowship of my family, the desire to finish reading that story which I had to leave at the most interesting point. If I stick to my task and complete the chapter, the resulting satisfaction will no doubt more

than repay me for what I have had to forego in other directions. When a similar situation arises I will be more inclined to follow the harder line of duty. If, on the other hand, the distractions get the better of me and prevent my completing my task, and at the same time I have lost the afternoon of enjoyment, I will probably conclude that it would have been better to have left the task in the first place. This is what I will tend to do under similar conditions next time.

We are now in a position to see why so much is made of *situations* in religious education. They are the stuff out of which experience is made. They are the avenue to centering education in life. Let us be clear, however, that life situations in and of themselves do not make for growth in Christian character. Their significance for religious education lies in the interpretation and guidance which the Christian teacher may bring to them in order to assure a response in the light of the teachings of Jesus. The baby has a tendency to grasp every bright object, but the parent-teacher strives to lead him to distinguish between dangerous and safe bright objects. The boys who found the pocketbook may be led to see that experience in the light of a Christian response and thus gain a new vision of responsibility toward others when lost property is found. The young man faced with the problem of investing his life will make his response in the light of ideals of gain or of service which he may have learned. The girl who is inclined to look down on the "foreigners" in her school may change her attitude completely when her problem is seen in the light of the meaning of the fatherhood of God for human brotherhood. In short, character grows through experience. Christian teach-

ing by enriching and interpreting the situations which boys and girls are facing, guides the direction of that experience.

### Discovering Life Situations

It will be clear from our discussion thus far why education has laid so much emphasis on a study of the child. Only in so far as we understand his nature and his needs may we hope successfully to make our education center in life. The study of the pupil must be made from two general lines of approach. The first is the approach from the angle of scientific research, which can be done only by the trained expert under the facilities which may be made available through a central curriculum board or agency with abundant resources at its disposal. The second approach is from the angle of the local teacher or leader, more informal in method, but often more direct and personal, and withal very essential to effective teaching.

1. *The place of research.*—Research sets itself the more difficult and exact problems of child-study. One of these is the problem of how learning takes place. Through long years of observation and experimentation, there have gradually emerged the laws of learning on which our modern pedagogy is based. In many cases the findings of research have been in harmony with the dictates of common sense, but in many other cases (for example, the most effective ways of memorizing) we have been surprised to find how far wrong our common practice was. The wise teacher will keep an ear attuned to all that science may have to offer by way of new knowledge on the process of learning.

In our present connection we are particularly concerned with the contribution of research toward dis-

covering the actual experience of growing persons. In these investigations studies are made of large numbers of persons of all ages, and by tabulation, comparison, correlation, and interpretation it is possible to gain an idea of the experience of persons generally. There are several ways in which a study of the experience of growing persons may be made, of which we shall list but a few of the simpler ones:

*a*) A study of what persons do, what they are interested in, what they learn, what they write and draw when free to produce as they like, what games they play, how they spend their leisure, who their friends are and many other facts which reveal experience. This provides a basis for planning activities in the curriculum which may be of greatest interest and value.

*b*) Reports of situations as they may be observed by some one who is trained in reporting such material. In such reports an effort is made to determine what are the factors in a situation, and what is said and done by the individual or the group in response to the situation. In recording such situations, care must be exercised to report only what was said and done, not the reporter's own interpretation. Here are two examples of such situation-reports:

Robert. Seven years, three months. Robert was usually given five cents each week for his Sunday school offering. On Easter Sunday morning his father gave him ten cents for a special Easter offering. On their way to the Sunday school Robert and his friend, John, aged eight years, stopped at a drug store and bought five cents worth of candy. When they reached the Sunday school Robert said to a little girl, "Teacher said to give the extra money because we really wanted to. I really don't want to give any extra so I bought this candy."[2]

[2] *Life Experiences and the New Curriculum—A Guide to Objective Observation.* Copyrighted by the International Council of Religious Education, 1929, p. 8. Used by permission.

Boys and girls. Four and five years. A number of children were playing "froggy in the middle." Marjorie while running to find the froggy fell down and skinned her knee. Mary Ann found froggy so she was entitled to be froggy the next time. But when she saw Marjorie's skinned knee and her tears she said, "Marjorie, you may be froggy this time." The next child in turn asked Mary Ann to take her place.[3]

Situation-reports may reveal much about significant types of experience. They may show the kind of moral and religious ideas people have, the kind of choices they need to make and do make, their standards and ideals as expressed in words and actions, misdeeds and good deeds, and many other things. When gathered in large numbers, classified, analyzed, and interpreted, they provide a valuable approach to understanding the experience of persons. We reproduce on an accompanying page one style of blank which has been used for the purpose of recording situations.

*c*) Another method for securing data on the experience of growing persons is that of making a continuous study of one individual. This may take the form of a life-history, in which the significant events in that life are recorded with a view to determining the outstanding influences. Case studies may be made when it is desired to find out something specific about an individual, as when an investigation is made to determine why a pupil habitually steals from his fellows even though he apparently could get from his parents everything which he might desire. When such individual studies are brought together in large numbers they offer possibilities of revealing much about the experience of people generally, and how conduct may be influenced and character formed.

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[3] *Life Experiences and the New Curriculum—A Guide to Objective Observation.* Copyrighted by the International Council of Religious Education, 1929, p. 9. Used by permission.

## RECORD OF SITUATION AND RESPONSE[4]

Objective Observation
International Council of Religious Education
5 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois

*(Follow carefully the directions on accompanying sheet entitled "Instructions to Observers.")*

Date or dates of your observation*____
_____
(Give month, day, and year.)

Date of recording_____
(Give month, day, and year.)

Your (the observer's) relation to the person or group that was observed___
_____

Name of person observed_____
(Or Initials, or Code.)

Kind of group observed_____
(When a group is observed state what kind: class, club, scouts, etc.)

Age of person:_____yrs._____mos., or age limits in the group observed: from_____to_____. Sex:_____male _____female_____mixed group.
(Check proper space.)

*SITUATION*: *A careful and detailed account of the experience observed. Objective factors. What was done and said, etc., to which the person (or group) made a response. Place. People present. Important circumstances and previous happenings.*

*RESPONSE*: *What the observed person (or group) did or said in response to the situation. (This may be included with the situation above.)*

*IMPORTANT FACTS about the person's (or group's) home life, school life, play life, occupation, religious life, etc. (See instructions for details.) Religion (if other than Protestant)_____Nationality and Race (if other than native born white)_____Grade in school_____Grade in church school_____Place of experience: Name of post office, and state_____, ____Rural____Village____Town____City (check proper space). Add other important facts.*

*(Use reverse side for additional statements, if necessary.)*

Name of observer _____ Address_____
(Name and address may be omitted, if desired.)

*If your report is on a recalled (remembered) observation and not a "direct objective observation," record as nearly as possible the exact date of observation. Also check the square and the proper space below.

☐ Recalled Observation. I remember_____very distinctly_____quite distinctly_____vaguely.

Form C. I. 102 5M 6-28.

[4]Copyrighted by the International Council of Religious Education. Used by permission.

*d*) A fourth way of studying the experience of persons is through personal interviews, in which they may be encouraged to reveal problems, interests, ambitions, and various types of situations. Sometimes this method is modified to include a group instead of one individual, through distributing blanks to be filled out. Obviously the interview method has great possibilities with persons who are old enough to participate in its use.

Experience is continuous. A type of situation may appear again and again. For example, the type of situation which has to do with relationships with other races will be met with at almost any point in every normal life. Research must do us the further service of indicating when certain situations may be best dealt with, when they are most frequent, when they are most difficult, and in what form we may expect to meet them in different ages. This gives us the basis for deciding what should be done in each grade, and makes possible the proper gradation of the curriculum.

2. *The place of the local leader in discovering life situations.*—Important as may be the work of the research agency, it does not take the place of the first-hand discovery of his own pupils by each teacher. Some of the research methods which we have discussed above may be applied in a very elementary and informal way by the teacher. Research gives the teacher a picture of persons generally. The teacher's own study of his individual pupils will lead to a knowledge of them in particular as flesh and blood human beings. The son of a poor washerwoman was sent home one day with a statement from the teacher that his general bodily cleanliness ought to be looked after. The mother did not understand what this might have to do with higher edu-

cation, and sent back a note saying, "I want you to *learn* Johnny, not smell him!" Through her error in grammar she had unintentionally given the teacher a bit of sound advice. To learn Johnny is exactly what every teacher must do if he would approach the task of education from the standpoint of life situations. How shall this knowledge of the pupil's situations be attained?

1. *Through "a heap o' livin'."*—The teacher must first of all bring a rich background of personal experience. To understand growing life he must himself have lived. Only one who has lived in such a way as to have gained a full appreciation of the highest values in life can hope to be a successful guide to other learners. Only one who has loved folks, and particularly the kind of folks whom he is teaching, will know the art of entering into their experience and into their sense of values. True, it is sometimes misleading to interpret the experience of others by our own. But hazardous as it may be to do this, it is, on the other hand, still more hazardous to attempt to interpret the experience of others without such a background in one's own experience to which it may be referred. Such richness of life does not result only from personal experience. Much of it may be vicarious or learned from the experience of others. To understand the situations of others will be much easier for one who has lived not only with actual flesh and blood human beings but who has lived on intimate terms with the great characters of literature and history.

2. *Through much study.*—There is a popular fallacy which regards "book learning" as something impractical and useless. Yet it is true that books contain some of

the greatest treasures of the human race. In them are recorded the thoughts of those who have given years of study to the subjects on which they are writing. While in a sense every child is an individual, it is also true that he belongs to a class which we call "children." The understanding of the individual child will be greatly facilitated by an understanding of children in general, such as the student of child nature is able to give us. The individual adolescent girl, for example, will be much more easily understood by one who has a general grasp of the nature and meaning of adolescence. He who would approach his task through the life situations of his pupils must get much of his general background from a study of books and magazines on psychology. When this is followed by personal contact with the persons about whom he has been studying, it will serve to clothe with flesh and blood and vitality what might otherwise be but dry bones.

3. *Through an abundance of fellowship with one's pupils.*—There is no substitute for the effort necessary for a teacher to make a direct, personal acquaintance with the pupils whom he is to lead. Opportunities for such a study of pupils are offered both within the school itself and in the life of the pupil outside the school.

In the school the teacher should be alert to questions, suggestions, spontaneous activities, intelligent interest in this or that subject, responses to situations offering opportunities for service, and other conduct situations. These offer the means of discovering the needs of the pupils and the effectiveness with which the teaching has been accomplished. Often the discovery of such situations may lead directly into fruitful teaching enterprises arising out of the normal life of the school.

The teacher must also have an acquaintance with the pupil in his life outside of the school if he is to come to any thorough understanding of that pupil. After all, most of the waking hours are spent in the home, the public school, and in the life of the community. The life situations out of which teaching should grow, and which reveal the effectiveness of the church's teaching work, are most readily found in this out-of-school life. There are a number of ways in which the teacher should undertake this study of the pupil:

*a*) One of these is the observation of the group activities of the pupils when they are taken from under the restraint of the school situation. A playground offers valuable opportunity for such observation. A recreational program in the church may readily be defended on the grounds of the facility it offers for seeing pupils reacting under life conditions. This is an argument for the necessity of relating the teacher closely to such a program. Excursions and picnics offer unusual opportunities for observing the situations and responses of one's pupils.

*b*) In addition to fellowship with his group of pupils, the teacher should also avail himself of the opportunity of cultivating the acquaintance of each individual. Even young children will be found to be worth knowing if they are treated with that wholesome respect which is due another individual. Various ways suggest themselves for making such personal acquaintance—a walk to or from the school, an invitation to visit the teacher's home, a discussion about a book, a visit on the part of the teacher to the pupil's home. Nothing can quite take the place of the opportunity offered for learn-

ing to know the pupil through a visit to his home and seeing him in this natural setting.

The charting method for getting a picture of the needs of an individual pupil has been used with much success. In its best form, this plan provides for a co-operative study of needs in which both pupil and teacher share. The pamphlet entitled, "How to Study Individual Growth," in the *Christian Quest*[5] series offers one of the best plans for self-evaluation.

*c*) There is another purpose in visiting the homes of one's pupils if they be children or young people. This is to form an acquaintance with the parents and secure their co-operation in understanding the children better. This suggests that opportunity should be provided for meeting the parents when the children are not present. Parent-Teacher Associations have done much to make this possible. The telephone offers a ready opportunity to get in touch with the mother or father. It is a striking fact that the problem of relating religious teaching to life is just the opposite in the home from what it is in the school. The home has a constant stream of life situations which must be met. Every hour of the day opportunities are arising for religious teaching and sometimes the situations are so crucial as to require immediate attention. The home, however, is very meagerly provided with teaching materials through which such situations may be met. The school, on the other hand, is amply provided with subject matter but has great difficulty in finding out what the life situations and problems of the pupil may be. This suggests at once the rich values for teaching which may flow out of wholesome confidence and interest between parent and teacher.

[5]International Council of Religious Education.

*d*) The public school offers another opportunity for securing a close contact with the life of one's pupils. The religious teacher, through knowing the interests and activities of the child in the public school, may at any point let the teaching of religion be an outgrowth of work which has already been done there. The life of the school also offers abundant opportunity for learning to know more about the pupil. Most teachers of religion could get valuable aid in their teaching problems through consultation with the public school teacher who has the same pupils.

*e*) The general life in the community offers the teacher unusual opportunities for discovering the situations of his pupils. It is during his leisure time that a person is most thoroughly expressing his character. The community provides the group with whom he associates. In the case of children, it provides the men and women with whom they come in contact, and whom they may emulate. The community provides the entertainment, such as motion pictures, athletic games, dances, and other activities, all of which have a most vital influence on character. It provides the parks, the playgrounds, and in the case of many persons, the great out-of-doors in which life may be lived. Sometimes the influence of the community is wholesome, while at other times it is negative for character growth. In any case the teacher should recognize in the community a great source for life situations through which such teaching may be offered as will promote religious growth.

Such a study of pupils suggests that the teacher should keep a careful record of each individual and some information about the group. Such a record would become a cumulative religious life history. This would

be of exceedingly great value to each succeeding teacher. It should contain information about the pupil's age, his home environment, his habits and disposition, some significant situations observed in his life and his response to them, evidences of religious purpose and growth, records of interviews with the teacher, his advancement in the life of the church, and many other things. No matter how elementary the record may be at the start, every teacher should keep some such notes on the life experience and needs of each of his pupils.

Let no one suppose that this kind of understanding of the pupil can be easily secured. It requires alertness, patience, time, and an abundance of *love*. While we have introduced economy into the teaching process by grouping pupils into classes, if in so doing we have intimated that the teacher is to deal only with a class, we have paid a high price for this economy. In all our striving to equal the public school in character of work, let us not overlook the great values inherent in such an intimate contact with pupils as the smaller class in the church school makes possible. He who has been a friend as well as teacher can bear witness to the many occasions on which very important life situations have been revealed through such contact which would never have come to the surface through any other method.

### How Do Life Situations Affect the Lesson?

Let us suppose that you have accepted this viewpoint and resolved to make your teaching center more fully in the life situations of your pupils. You have begun to make an active attempt to learn more about the members of your class, both as individuals and as

a group. You have begun to keep notes on each one. Your notebook is beginning to fill up with valuable items. How is all this going to affect your teaching?

The life situations of your pupil are to you what the symptoms of a patient are to a doctor. For the doctor, the symptoms indicate what is wrong with the patient, and suggest the treatment. The doctor calls this study of his patient "diagnosis." Just so does the study of your pupil serve in helping you diagnose his case. It will help you to prescribe the religious experience and teaching needed by that pupil to help him toward the more abundant life.

No doubt you have a lesson book handed to you which you are supposed to follow. What are you going to do with it if you attempt to have your teaching grow out of the situations of your pupils?

There are at least three ways in which the discovered life situations of the members of your department or class should help you in your work:

1. *Determining the emphases in your work.*—A lesson writer attempts to make the prepared course fit the needs of pupils of a given age in general. Needless to say, adaptations must be made to the case of a particular group. The situations of the group determine the adaptations which shall be made. After all, a prepared course is intended to be a help, not a hindrance. Careful comparisons should be made between it and the needs of the pupils for whom it is intended. Through such comparison it may be discovered at which points the course will be most helpful, in coming closest to the needs of the group.

A teacher of Junior boys and girls was following a series of lessons based on stories from Genesis. Know-

ing that these narratives were somewhat far removed from their present life background, she made a study of these boys and girls to determine where their greatest needs might lie. She decided that a spirit of forgiveness was one of their most pressing needs. Consequently this teacher was on the alert for lessons which might have their center in this problem. When she came to Jacob and Esau she opened with a discussion on forgiveness, including such problems as how we should treat others who have wronged us, when should we forgive, and what are the kinds of injuries which we have had to forgive. Esau forgiving his brother had its effect. This was followed with still more effectiveness by the story of Joseph forgiving his brothers. Following this story, the teacher introduced a story of an Indian boy who forgave his bitter enemy and saved his enemy's life. Throughout these lessons the teacher used conduct-assignments, that is, she asked the pupils to observe the spirit of forgiveness throughout the week, and report back how it worked.

Sometimes a situation at the moment that it arises may turn the lesson or program for the day into a more fruitful channel than that provided by the teacher's plan. It may lead to activities which are decided upon at the moment, and are most effective because they are spontaneous. Hence the need for the teacher or leader having his lesson or program so well in hand that adaptations may easily be made.

My little son, for whom there is nothing on this earth more interesting than trains, created a situation in the Beginners' Department one morning, when the children were asked what they would like to sing, by announcing, "I want to sing about a train!" And why not?

Wasn't it just as natural to sing about his greatest interest as to sing about flowers, and birds, and babies? Unfortunately the book did not contain a song about a train. But the occasion might have been one for the telling of a story about a train, which to him would have been much more interesting than a song anyway. Would it be sacrilege to tell him a story in which we represent God as being interested in seeing the great trains run? Not if God is as near to human life as we have taught that he is. Not to anyone who could see the boy's face light up with new interest in God at mention of his being interested in trains. With him it is not trains which are on trial—they are an accepted fact. It is God with whom he is just getting acquainted. And God will seem all the more like a Father if shown to have a regard for the things in which the boy is interested.

2. *Leading into fruitful enterprises and activities.*—There are times when discovered life situations open such great areas of need that the teacher or leader is constrained to build his work on these needs, even though it may involve a radical departure from a set program. Every project or enterprise is, to some extent, of this nature. Such enterprises may be very far-reaching in their development and value. They may involve the adoption of a course of study which is centered in this particular interest. Whenever electives are included in the curriculum, it is in recognition of the fact that pupils may find some decided trends of interest which are not cared for in the regular courses. A few illustrations will help at this point.

Our first illustration is a case of what might have happened, but didn't. "That child—I'm happiest when

he stays at home!'' So spoke a Beginners teacher after a vivid recital of the problem created by a boy given to conduct commonly described as ''stubborn.'' What she meant was that when he did stay at home it was so much easier to get the group to go through the motions of singing songs, learning Bible verses, and doing handwork. Is it unkind to remark that this teacher's very sincere feeling in the matter was just as sensible as if a doctor would say to his patients who really have something wrong with them, ''I wish you would not come to me!'' With all due regret that children are so mishandled in the home as to produce cases like the above, is it unfair to assume that a real teacher should respond with a cry of joy, ''Thank heaven, this child has come to Sunday school where we can do something for him!'' That would be meeting a life situation for this child!

The boys in Mr. Johnson's class were very much excited. It was rumored that the son of the new manager of the hotel, who was to move to this town soon, was to attend their Sunday school. They were an Italian family. The son would probably be in the class with the boys. They were not at all sure that they wanted a ''dago'' in their class. Mr. Johnson sensed an unusual opportunity for Christian education and, laying aside his lesson quarterly, started a discussion of the proper Christian attitude toward foreigners. He did not preach to them. Rather did he stimulate them to talk the matter out among themselves. The session soon grew very animated, and it was evident that the matter could not be settled then and there. Before they finished it, they had spent a month on this problem, and such an interesting month as they had never before

experienced. In the course of this month they investigated the teachings and example of Jesus with respect to the treatment of other races, made a study of the Book of Job, considered the immigration laws of our country, looked into the contribution of Italians to civilization, and centered their worship services around this problem. In the end they voted formally to invite the Italian boy to join their class, stage a reception for him when he arrived, and as one of the features of their future work, to have him tell about the country of his father's birth. This teacher used a life situation to good advantage in deciding what to teach.

It was harvest home day in the church. Recognizing this as having possible interest for children, the leader of Beginners sought to include in the program an interpretation of harvest. But it was done in an abstract way. "Does anyone here know the meaning of harvest?" she inquired. Of course they did not. "I know it is a very *unusual* word," added the leader, and proceeded with an abstract definition. There is more truth than charity in saying that this leader completely failed in achieving the objective for this session. Yet, there were two ways in which the session could have been so conducted as to center very vividly in the life of the children: (1) The leader might have brought into the room a display of fruit, vegetables, and grain (a very real addition by way of decoration to the barren room) and centered the program around the thought of thankfulness for the harvest, or, (2) she might have taken the children into the church auditorium, which had been beautifully decorated with the products of the harvest, conducted the worship service there, centering it around the interpretation of the meaning of these

decorations in the church. Incidentally, this would have afforded an opportunity for introducing the pastor into the service, and making the church more real in the lives of the children.

3. *Testing the effectiveness of teaching.*—In a previous chapter we took the position that we have no assurance that pupils have learned that which they do not practice. A study of life situations is a study in what pupils are actually practicing.

A little boy had developed the attitude of regarding prayer at table as a joke, in spite of everything the parents could do to teach him otherwise. Then came his first day in Sunday school. He found that they had prayer there too, and was much impressed. Moreover, he noted that all the little boys and girls reverently folded their hands and bowed their heads during the prayer. From that moment on he was a model of reverence during prayer at table, for weeks to come. The response to the home situation indicated that the teaching in the school had been well done.

A father whose little daughter was in a week-day church school class in which a study had been made of the story of the Good Samaritan, reported: "One day a man with a new car got stuck in a mudhole in the street right in front of our house. After watching him struggle for a while, I went out and helped him get out. When I came in all dirty, my little girl said, 'Daddy, how much did that man pay you for helping him out of the mud?' 'Oh, nothing,' I replied. 'Well, did you do it just to help him?' she asked. 'Yes.' 'Oh, Daddy, then you were a Good Samaritan!' she said." This incident proved a test of the effectiveness of the work of the teacher of this girl.

Many attempts have been made to devise tests of moral and religious growth. In the final analysis the only valid basis for such tests is the actual conduct of pupils. Thus life situations offer some of the most valuable data toward weighing the results of teaching.

## Conclusion

As in so many values of life, in this new emphasis in education there is danger in going to extremes. It does require us to be more informal in our work. It does lead us to allow flexibility in our department and class programs, so as to develop our work with full account taken of pupil situations. It does not, however, give us license to follow the whims of our pupils and let them determine what is to be done. The pupil does not always recognize his own greatest needs, or the best way to meet those needs. The first responsibility rests on the lesson-maker to construct materials which in a broad way cover the needs of pupils in the various grades as revealed by systematic research. Then the responsibility rests on the teacher to see in a large way the needs of his own group and plan at least the main outlines of a curriculum to meet these needs. Often the things which will become of greatest interest to the pupil, and of largest value to him will not become a life situation for him until the teacher has stimulated his activities in that direction by carefully "setting the stage" toward that end. As the curriculum which has been planned along these general lines moves out into the life of the school, it must constantly be checked against the needs of the pupils. Modifications, adaptations, and specific applications must be made as the curriculum is developed more and more on the basis of the situations of the pupils.

One of the most difficult tasks of the lesson-maker is to construct courses which will, when used by the local teacher, really center in the life of his pupils. It is so easy for the teacher to simply follow the book without doing the necessary hard work of discovering the situations of his pupils and reshaping the materials offered to meet those situations. Scarcely a lesson course is being constructed today, however, without some recognition of this educational principle. Many of the newer courses are so completely based on it that in using them the teacher will be hopelessly at sea if he does not understand the elementary principles here discussed. We must leave the discussion of available courses, however, for a later chapter.

## PROBLEMS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Examine three types of lesson courses and determine by what method the writer of each sought to develop it on the basis of life situations.

2. By use of the blank on page 77 as a guide, record five life situations of persons or groups of any age.

3. Seek to engage some child of your acquaintance in conversation and, in a normal way, lead him out on his ideas of God and Jesus. Make a record of what you learn. How might this information influence the work of the teacher of this child?

4. Discuss with the parents of one or more of your children what you are trying to accomplish through the lesson for a given Sunday. Ask them to report to you any evidences of the effect of your teaching in the conduct of your pupils.

5. Ask a mother of your acquaintance to give you a list of the things her child does in one day for which she commended him. The things for which she scolded or punished him. Would these lists have any value in guiding the teacher of this child in making his work life-centered? How?

6. Get from the day-school teachers of the pupils in your class a statement of the things they study for one week in geography, history, and literature. Consider this in the light of what you plan to do in Sunday school the following Sunday. Does it offer situations you can use? If so, how do the pupils respond to such reference to their day school work?

7. Check up with your class the movies they attend in one week. In so far as you can, make a list of the situations they present which offer teaching opportunities for your Sunday lesson.

8. If the boy in the situation described on page 75 and the group described in the situation on page 76 were your pupils, what meaning would you draw from these situations concerning their religious needs which might be met by your teaching?

9. Suppose you are asked to make a talk on world friendship before an Intermediate Department. What would you like to know about the life situations of these pupils before undertaking it?

10. Suppose you are principal of a Junior Department and discover one morning that some of your pupils have badly marred their class table by drawing pictures on it. Would this be a situation of which you could make use for religious teaching? How would you use it?

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

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## CHAPTER V

## EDUCATIONAL METHOD IN TEACHING RELIGION

Two men live in adjoining houses in a small village. Each has a garden. The one raises prize-winning vegetables while the other raises nothing but scrub stuff. Both have the same material with which to work—seed, soil, fertilizer, tools, moisture, sunshine. What makes the difference in the product? It is the superior *method* of the former. He digs his garden early and deep. He prepares the soil with utmost care. He uses the best fertilizer and keeps the weeds out. He supplies the proper moisture with hose and sprinkling can when nature neglects to do so. He does nothing to the vegetables themselves, directly. He but supplies the *conditions* under which growth can best take place.

So it is with the growth of human character. Good educational method consists in so using the materials of character growth as to secure the best results. Suppose that I desire to teach my class better attitudes of reverence during the morning worship hour. One way of proceeding is to lecture to them about reverence, and to threaten dire punishment if they do not heed my admonitions. Another way is to lead them through a genuine worship experience of their own, such as preparing and conducting a program of worship for their department. In the process of taking them through this adventure I will have an opportunity to interpret for them the meaning of worship, and the reason for the attitudes which seem to be desired in church. If it is

true that growth takes place in experience, then by the latter plan I achieve the best results. In neither case have I reached into the inside of the character of each boy and made a change. I have but supplied conditions under which growth would take care of itself.

When we speak of method, we imply that we are using some material in an orderly and effective way to produce a desired end. Educational method includes among its materials the present situations of the pupil, his past experience, the experience of the teacher, and the experience of the race in order to produce certain desired development and growth on the part of the pupil. Method has no meaning or value apart from accomplishing the *purpose* for which it is called into use. To prepare a good meal requires that something be done in a certain way to the raw materials out of which the meal is to be made. The purpose in view is the good meal. Method has no meaning apart from the meal. The proof of the cook's art is not in the flourishes of her technique, but in the pudding which she produces. So it is with everything we do, from chopping wood to painting a picture. The one who gets the best results in the best way is the one who uses the best method. But it is the product which interests us, and not the method by which it was produced.

Method in teaching religion has been much stressed in recent years. Is there danger that we emphasize it so much as to defeat the *purpose* of religious teaching? Some say that there is. Yet if method is but a way of using materials for the accomplishment of a desired purpose, then it is difficult to see how anyone who has a clear conviction of the purpose of his work can allow method to stand in any other relation than as servant

to that purpose. The real danger is with the person who has no clear conception of his purpose and uses clever methods as a substitute for something more vital. Beware of the teacher who makes a showy display of his method! His case is apt to be not unlike that of the steamboat which had such a large whistle that after it was blown to warn people of the boat's coming, there was no longer any steam left to move the boat! The best safeguard against this danger is to help each teacher to see the true relationship which method sustains to his entire curriculum.

### The Curriculum and Method

We are now in a position to see why this question of method is raised in a discussion on curriculum. Method *is* a part of the curriculum. We have taken the position that the curriculum centers in experience. Through it we seek to enrich experience in order to give it wider meaning. Through it we seek to lead the pupil in gaining a better control of his experience so that his responses may be more Christlike. Through it we seek to bring about a continuous *reconstruction* of experience to take full account of the more and more mature knowledge, attitudes, and habits of conduct that may have grown out of this process of experience in living the Christian life.[1]

Method then consists in bringing about those conditions under which enrichment and control of experience can best take place. It is but another name for *arranging opportunities for learning.* This may consist of such things as leading the pupil into new experiences

[1]This idea of education as reconstruction of experience is one of the many contributions of John Dewey. See his *Democracy and Education,* chapter vi. Macmillan, 1925.

helping him to sense the significance of the experience he is now undergoing, raising problems which he does not sense of his own accord, guiding him to the sources where wisdom may be found, or giving him the information which he needs to solve his problem intelligently or engage in a projected enterprise successfully. Let the teacher keep an eye single to the ideal of spiritual growth, and method will be seen in its right perspective. If growth will best take place through playing a co-operative game, participating in a worship service, watching a sunset on the lake, or seeing *The King of Kings,* then for him the best method consists in having his pupils do just these things. If it will best take place through hearing a story, participating in discussion, or listening to a lecture, then it is the teacher's part to supply that experience. There is no test of what is the *best* method apart from the test of spiritual growth.

## How Do We Learn?

Good method is not the result of some clever invention. It grows out of insight into the nature of the learner. If we may discover how a person learns when he is going about the normal business of living outside of schools, we will be in a position to adopt methods which will be most effective. Most of the improvements which have come about in educational method during recent years have been made possible by the careful studies in the psychology of learning which have been made. The heart of the problem of method lies in the effort to make our school work approach in so far as possible the conditions under which learning may best take place in normal life. A worker in wood conforms to the laws of the material he is working with in order

to produce the smoothness of surface, strength, shade of stain, and other qualities in his finished product. A worker with human beings is but using refined common sense when he complies with the laws of growth with which God has endowed his "material" in order to produce the highest quality of Christian character.

It is essential that the teacher of religion should know in a very elementary way at least the answer to the question, "How do we learn?" It is the first requisite to answering the further question, "How shall we teach?" It is not easy to classify the ways in which learning takes place, and any classification is unsatisfactory because each type in our classification has in it elements of all the others. Yet it will help us to make an attempt to discuss this subject under several headings.

1. *Everyday activity.*—The business of living leads inevitably to learning. In his daily activities all over the house, Richard has the experience now and again of being placed on the couch and allowed to look out of the window at the fascinating world of "bye-bye." Later he desires to get up on the couch of his own accord, so that he may repeat the experience. All attempts fail him until one day his little chair is accidentally placed in front of the couch, and he finds that by its aid he can negotiate the climb. Thereafter the chair is a ready instrument which he may use in his purpose. He has "learned." Four-year-old Katherine comes home and says, "When I get big and have lots of money, I'm going to give it all to the poor people!" Where did she get the idea? Perhaps from some children with whom she played in the park. Every child learns many more things than we consciously teach him. Most of them are "just picked up."

The child is born going. Whatever inborn tendencies and impulses he may have are soon modified by experience. Moving, grasping, tasting, romping, playing, vocalizing, he goes through those early years, gathering constantly an increasing fund of experience in his world. Thus he learns the properties of matter and the attitudes of people. If he is blocked in carrying out his purposes, he tries and tries again until a way out is found. Learning by "trial and error" we call this. He does not go far until he comes upon the knowledge that some things are right and other things are wrong. Increase in years brings a larger capacity for exploration, discovery, and observation, carrying him into a world of knowledge with a constantly increasing radius. Even in adult life a wider knowledge and a new understanding are continually resulting from the many and varied activities in which adults engage. The activity of a boy or girl, which is so often the despair of parents and teachers, is the best road to his education.

When a person is engaged in the everyday activities of life, there is a *purpose,* an end in view, which determines what he does. For a little child this purpose may shift rapidly from one thing to another. One moment he may be building a bridge of blocks, while the next moment he is looking at a picture-book. A man may carry a purpose through many months or years, as when he aspires to a public office and for years in advance cultivates those friendships and makes those connections which will ultimately bring success to his ambition. It is the purpose in view which makes a person labor with joy, endure what would be intolerable drudgery if seen without relation to the purpose, and master any amount of knowledge and skill necessary to the success of his

dominant ideal. Whatever he does that has a bearing on his purpose, if it succeeds gives satisfaction, if it fails gives a sense of annoyance or dissatisfaction. Those things which succeed will be used again as occasion requires and will tend to be remembered, those which fail will be avoided and soon be forgotten. Purposes may be of all kinds and varieties, from getting a good meal to achieving a Christian character. It is purposes which give meaning to life, and serve as the motive power to compel conduct.

The relation of this discussion to education is obvious. If we would have a pupil learn most normally, get his purpose set on the desirable end in view. Relate teaching to his purposes, in the sense of giving him the power better to achieve them. We have always insisted that the teacher should have an aim for each lesson. That the pupil also have an aim around which to center his work is clearly made necessary by a consideration of the place of purpose in learning.

2. *Association with others.*—Man is a social being, and much of his learning comes from his association with others. The child cannot help learning many things from those with whom he associates. Their attitudes toward him and their actions in his behalf give him a first-hand experience which no words can adequately describe. He learns the meaning of love by having the experience of being loved and cared for, and in his turn loving those who care for him. It is on this background in experience in the family that we base our teaching of what God is when we call him the "heavenly Father." He learns the meaning of duty and responsibility through actually living them with others.

Imitation and suggestion play an important part in

becoming educated. By "imitation" we mean a tendency to copy the actions of others. An example is much easier to follow than mere abstract directions. The piano teacher will not simply tell the pupil how to play, he will *show* him how. Where is the parent who has not been mortified by hearing his own voice and words to his child repeated by that child to his younger brother or teddy bear! Who has not had his own pet habits (as, for instance, putting his hands into his pockets) reproduced to a nicety in his son!

When we learn by "suggestion" we adopt the thoughts, feelings, and modes of behavior of others without *consciously* accepting them. They just seem to become a part of us, we know not how or when. So we acquire accents in speech, styles of dress, and shades of political opinion. To be sure, we may reason out elaborately why we think or act as we do—after we have accepted that mode of thought or action! When short hair is the style, it is not likely that we come to the conclusion to bob after a process of reasoning. We simply wake up some day to the realization that it is *just* the thing to do. And so with growing the hair when the style reverses. And so (lest the men become too self-complacent with our illustration) with wide trousers and multi-colored socks. Suggestion may come also by means of the printed page and pictures as well as by means of persons.

The educative influence exerted on us by others, without conscious purpose on their part or conscious acceptance on ours, is more far-reaching than most of us ever dream or imagine. Think of the power of the family in shaping the thought of its members! How can the child help taking on the race prejudices, the political

views, and the religious conviction of the parents when he breathes them with the very atmosphere of the home? Professor James Bissett Pratt makes a statement on this point which should give every teacher of religion some food for thought. "The boy may be taught all the Thirty-nine Articles or howsoever many there be, but if he sees in his parents and those about him no expression of reverence for a Power greater than themselves, no sign of worship or of religious feeling in their conduct or their conversation, his religion will probably be of a very superficial sort. It is more important that he should imitate actions which are expressive of religious feelings and thus come to wonder, think, and feel for himself, than that he should learn any amount of pious words. Carlyle makes Teufelsdröckh refer to this indirect influence of his foster-parents as the power in his own early religion. 'The highest whom I knew on earth I here saw bowed down, with awe unspeakable, before a Higher in heaven: such things, especially in infancy, reach inward to the very core of your being.' "[2] As with the family, so in somewhat lesser degree with the community. The growing person takes on the color of his surroundings. Small wonder that it is the person who travels widely and touches the lives of many communities who is most likely to rise to a breadth of thought and vision.

Much of education comes by way of social participation in groups and social relations with individuals. In primitive society practically all of education comes about in this way. In the days before agricultural colleges the way for a boy to learn farming was through associating in the activity with his father. And while they

[2]Pratt, James Bissett. *The Religious Consciousness.* Macmillan, 1924, pp. 95-96.

lacked much of our modern knowledge and experimental attitude, let it be said that some of those farmer-teachers made exceptionally good farmers out of their sons. This is the secret in the oft-repeated statement that religion is "caught" rather than "taught." We would, however, regard such education through social participation as very definitely included in what we have defined as teaching. "The best teaching is in the spirit of fellowship. Intelligence, initiative, responsibility, and other like qualities which education seeks to develop cannot be acquired by reading or talking about them. They can be learned only by actual fellowship and participation in the life and activities of a co-operating group. It is the business of the school to make possible such fellowship in learning, and to stimulate such participation on the part of pupils. The task of the teacher is to serve as leader, inspirer, and friend of all in the group, sharing their experiences, guiding their projects, and making available to them his own larger resources. It is in such fellowship of old and young, sharing in the adventure of learning and reaching out toward a fuller life that ideals gain substance and force and become established permanently as part of the natural furniture of the mind."[3]

3. *Reasoning.*—The application of genuine thought to problems is a fruitful way for broadening knowledge and understanding. Everyone has had the experience of coming to a point in his work where he could not go further without study and perhaps some experimentation. In the process of solving his problem he comes upon new knowledge which will be usable in new

[3]Weigle and Oldham, *Religious Education*, Reports of the Jerusalem Council Meeting of the I. M. C., 1928, p. 22. Used by permission.

situations. When the process of reasoning or reflective thought is carried on under the most rigidly controlled conditions, we call it the scientific method.

John Dewey, in his classical book *How We Think,* gives a simple illustration which will make the process of reasoning very clear:

> The other day when I was down town on 16th Street a clock caught my eye. I saw that the hands pointed to 12:20. This suggested that I had an engagement at 124th Street, at one o'clock. I reasoned that as it had taken me an hour to come down on a surface car, I should probably be twenty minutes late if I returned the same way. I might save twenty minutes by a subway express. But was there a station near? If not, I might lose more than twenty minutes in looking for one. Then I thought of the elevated, and I saw there was such a line within two blocks. But where was the station? If it were several blocks above or below the street I was on, I should lose time instead of gaining it. My mind went back to the subway express as quicker than the elevated; furthermore, I remembered that it went nearer than the elevated to the part of 124th Street I wished to reach, so that time would be saved at the end of the journey. I concluded in favor of the subway, and reached my destination by one o'clock.[4]

If we were to trace the steps involved in the above case, we would find the following: (1) A sense of something wrong when the late hour was noted; (2) location and definition of the difficulty—must get to 124th Street by one o'clock; (3) suggestion of possible solution—street car, elevated, subway, or taxicab; (4) consideration of each suggestion in its possible bearing on getting to the appointment on time; (5) the acceptance of one of the suggested solutions, acting on it, and thereby proving or disproving its practical value. The reader may follow through these several steps any problem in-

[4]Published by D. C. Heath and Co., Boston. Used by permission.

volving reasoning which he has faced—for instance, your automobile fails to start; you find on Sunday morning when you are ready to start for Sunday school that your clock is 15 minutes slow; your pupils are not interested in their lessons. Not all these steps are consciously taken in solving every problem. Sometimes we leap over one or another of them. Yet in such a simple situation as finding my room too warm, deciding whether to shut off the heat, open a window, or close the furnace, and by one of these methods restoring room comfort, the steps of reasoning are there. So also are they present in such an enormous problem as Newton raised for himself when he saw the apple fall to the ground, and in his solution discovered the law of gravitation.

The workings of the human mind in the process of reasoning have important bearings for education. Once get the mind to work on a felt problem, and it will eagerly feed on every bit of guidance which may become available as data for a solution. When a satisfactory solution has been found it provides a new bit of knowledge to apply in new situations. Thus when I succeed in keeping my room at the right temperature, I have provided myself with knowledge which I can use without effort in similar situations on each succeeding day. When Newton gave us the law of gravitation, he provided us with knowledge which has been of help to countless thousands from that moment forward. This capacity for unrest and discontent, leading out in quest of new truth and better ways of doing things is one of the noblest qualities of humanity. He is a really great teacher who can continuously disturb the mental equilibrium of his pupils, set their purposes in the direction of the better way, and give them that stimulation and

guidance which will enable them to attain the new levels of achievement, which again will be but steppingstones in the eternal quest of the higher, the nobler, the more divine.

4. *Direct teaching.*—Teaching to most people means to tell a pupil something, or to cause him to learn it from a book. This is of course one avenue of learning. Our dependence on instruction in the past was not wrong in purpose, it was only emphasized too much to the exclusion of other important ways of learning.

Let us bear in mind a few things involved in this method of learning which will lead us to exercise due caution in its use. (1) We learn things by hearing or reading them when they strike an interest or need in our lives. We give no attention to the book, paper, or lecture which touches our interests not at all. (2) It is very *easy* to tell young children anything. They will believe us implicitly. They have no background in experience out of which to judge critically that which they hear. Consequently perfectly absurd notions, resulting from a misunderstanding of what we say, may be accepted without challenge. (3) It is, on the other hand, *hard* to tell children anything because their vocabulary and experience is so limited, and words are understood only as they rest on a background of experience. Many grotesque misconceptions result from this fact. The world is full of stories of "children's sayings" which would be funny if they were not so pathetic in their revelation of adult failures. Here is an example of such a childish misunderstanding:

> Jean was three years old; and a new "Nannie" had come, as she said, to "keep care of her." Shyly, yet confidingly, she had conducted her round the house, showing all her treasures

indoors and out. As they passed through the large hall, her wee hand gripped her Nannie's more firmly. Pointing to a dark grating in one corner, she whispered, "Nannie, Jesus lives inside that dark hole." Her quaint childish logic was revealed for the first time to this new Nannie, who had so quickly won her confidence. She had been told that "Jesus was ever near her," though she could not see him; this dark grating was the only place "near her" into which she could not see; hence, behind the dark grating, *must* be Jesus![5]

5. *Worship.*—If we interpret learning as the enrichment and control of experience, as the gaining of attitudes and ideals as well as knowledge, then we should name worship as one of the ways of learning. By lifting it to a consciousness of relationship with God, worship adds a new quality to experience. It weighs and evaluates experience in the presence of God. It gives a new dynamic to activity. Communion with others in the worship of God leads to creative endeavor. In a service of worship all of the educative factors resulting from social suggestion and participation in activity are present, of course. Our point here is that over and above these the fact of communion with God brings about a change in experience which may well be described as learning. Learning is just as much a matter of seeing present experience in a new light and evaluating it as it is to gain new experience. Moreover, the great mystics of all ages have maintained that through communion with God it is possible to gain new insight.

Educational method results from the attempt to use these ways of learning. An illustration used by Kilpatrick, showing the steps involved in learning to master a new situation, will nicely summarize this part of our

[5]Mumford, Edith E. Read. *The Dawn of Religion in the Mind of the Child.* Longmans, Green & Co., 1915, pp. 31 and 32. Used by permission.

discussion. "If we consider out-of-school living, say of a child before going to school or of any man of affairs as he faces a novel situation, it is easy to see how learning is inherent in each forward step made in such living. Take, for instance, a child first attempting to feed himself with a spoon. Five steps are distinguishable: (1) he starts to feed himself; (2) he meets (typically) a difficulty, he lacks the needed behavior-skill; (3) he tries under the direction of nurse or mother to get the needed way-of-behaving; (4) at length, he finds, gets, and applies the hitherto lacking behavior-skill, the needed new way-of-behaving; (5) the activity begun under (1) and balked under (2) now goes forward. These steps are typical wherever life takes a step forward. We see then (a) how the demand for learning is inherent in progressive living; (b) how study, item (3) above, is for each individual an effort at the finding of a new way of behaving in the light of the demands of the situation and possibly under the guidance of one who can help steer the process; (c) how learning when thus got is essentially a creative act, even though the act is in part guided by another; and (d) how the actual situation tests whether the learning has in fact taken place by whether the balked activity really goes forward, whether the proposed new step is really taken."[6]

## Conditions for Effective Learning

While method cannot be reduced to a set of rules, there are certain aspects of the learning process as we have discussed it which should be more clearly seen in their bearing on our teaching work. We may think of

[6]Kilpatrick, William H., "The Philosophy of American Education." *Teachers College Record,* October, 1928, pp. 19-20. Used by permission.

them, in addition to what has already been said on the way in which we learn, as the *conditions* under which learning will be most effectively accomplished.

1. *Direct action.*—In so far as possible, learning should take place in its natural setting, that is, it should grow out of life situations. If courtesy is to be learned, teach it in situations requiring courtesy, under the motivation of a desire to learn courteous ways of behaving, rather than in the form of rules printed in a book. If you want to teach reverence, give the child experience in situations where reverence may be practiced. Only as we get direct action of this kind will we have present the conditions which make learning most likely. Our whole discussion on making education life-centered culminates in this principle. Our discussion on the value of purpose in education leads into it.

From the standpoint of method, this principle of direct action is best summed up in what has been called the "project principle."

What is a project? The definitions offered are innumerable. In the minds of many persons, the essence of the project method lies in having the pupils do something in which they are *physically* active. A vacation church school leader described as a "project" an undertaking in which he had the boys saw out blocks of wood to represent the books of the Bible. It may or may not have been a project. The project idea may have been present more with them when they sat still in their seats and listened to Bible stories.

The name of Kilpatrick has long been associated with the project idea. He distinguishes certain features as characteristic of a project:

*a*) There must be *purposing* on the part of pupils. They must definitely will to undertake the enterprise

which is to become a project. It may first have been present in the mind of the teacher, or it may have grown directly out of the minds of the pupils. But in no case is it a project if it *remains* the will of the teacher and is carried on by the pupils only because it is the will of the teacher.

*b*) The enterprise must be *planned* by the pupils themselves. It is here that much of the educative value comes in. The pupils need to draw on their own past experience and on other resources in building their plans. To be sure, the teacher is to serve as a guide and help in making the plans most effective, but the enterprise is not a project unless the pupils have been wholeheartedly active in the making of the plans.

*c*) The *execution* of the plans must again be carried on by the pupils. It is at this point where many by-products of learning emerge. The project may be one of building a doll's house, but in carrying it out there may be learned such things as buying lumber, using tools, and keeping accounts, as well as learning to cooperate with others.

*d*) Throughout the process, and particularly at the conclusion there must be *judging* of the thing which has been done. The pupil himself must call it good, or not good, in terms of *his purposes.* The resulting satisfactions tend to fix the things which have been learned, and tend to eliminate the repetition of those things which were not successful. Here again the teacher does what he can to develop the right appreciation for the values represented by the project, but in no case is it to be judged good only because the teacher says so.

According to this author, an undertaking may be classed as a project if it meets these four conditions.

The type of thing which is done does not matter. It may be a piece of construction, or it may be the solving of a problem, or it may be the learning of a skill, or even the enjoyment of a story or a piece of music. As long as these conditions are met—whole-hearted pupil-activity in purposing, planning, executing, and judging an undertaking—it is rightly classified as a project.

Charters emphasizes a different characteristic of the project principle by pointing out as its distinguishing feature that it must be carried on in its "natural setting." To learn to raise corn by growing an acre of corn—learning all one can from books, teachers, etc., in the doing—is a project. But to learn *about* growing corn in the classroom, and only later applying it, is not a project. Teaching is carried on for the purpose of helping pupils the better to live, and the best way to accomplish this is through the actual process of living, under guidance. According to this view, it is obvious that not everything can be learned through the project method, for it is not always possible to carry on the teaching in its natural setting.

These two views are not mutually exclusive, but add each a part to our understanding of the project method. The conditions under which learning takes place best are those which are most nearly like the conditions of actual life. It is in actual life that we have a "natural setting," and if a thing is done at all, it is done with "wholehearted, purposeful activity."

2. *Practice.*—The word "practice" is used in this connection with two different meanings. One meaning is that we must actually carry out in conduct what has been the subject of study before we may be sure that it has been learned. We have not really learned to

swim, no matter how much we study about it, until we get into the water and swim. The other meaning is in the sense that "practice makes perfect." We need to do a thing again and again in order to learn it well. Let us embrace both these ideas. We learn best what we carry out in life, and we learn it better and better as we practice it more.

According to this principle, the teacher would see to it not simply that learning takes place in its natural setting, but that frequent opportunities are afforded to practice that which is learned. The school has a distinct duty to perform in reducing certain basic knowledge and skill to the level of habit. Normal life needs will never lead to a memorization of the multiplication table, the books of the Bible or the Twenty-third Psalm. Such things require repetition again and again before they become so well fixed as to call up the right word or figure instantly and automatically when a problem is faced requiring it. But, swinging again to the other meaning of practice, it is of no value to memorize the multiplication table if it is not tied up with life needs. What is the value of knowing that five times twelve equal sixty if we make no connection between this fact and what five tons of coal would cost at twelve dollars each?

3. *Practice with satisfaction.*—Merely repeating an action does not necessarily make one learn it. Some things we learn by doing once. Some we never learn even though we repeat them many times. My four-year-old boy has never learned to wash his hands before meals even though he is required to do it three times a day. He does not like it. On the other hand, he can manage the quite complicated mechanism of an electric train.

He has but once forgotten to disconnect the transformer from the switch when through with it. Why? Because he likes trains and all that pertains thereto.

Things which do not bring satisfaction in the doing tend to be eliminated from conduct and forgotten. Those which do give satisfaction and success tend to be remembered and fixed. This is not the same as saying that we should follow the line of least resistance. For the early Christians it was easier to languish in dungeons than to deny Christ and be free. It brought greater *satisfaction* in the sense that we are using the term. A boy with an ambition for an education will find greater satisfaction in foregoing fine food, pleasures, good clothes, and attain his ambition, than to have all these things and forego the attainment of his goal.

What is the meaning of this principle for education? The reader may readily trace out the implications for himself. Learning should normally be accompanied by satisfaction. Little is to be gained by forcing a child to study his lessons if in so doing we create a distaste for what he is to learn. Constant compulsion to go to church or Sunday school will defeat its own end, for instead of establishing the habit it will more than likely lead to an abandonment of the practice just as soon as the compulsion is removed. Few of us succeeded in learning much through being kept after school to get our lessons. And what shall we say of parents who make their children read the Bible for punishment? It is the least effective way of helping them get it into their hearts. On the other hand, when living is accompanied with joy, optimism, a sense of achievement, the amount of learning will be greatly increased.

Any connection once made between a situation and a response tends to be made again. This is the law of *practice.* The likelihood that it will be made again depends on the satisfaction which resulted from the making of the connection. This is the law of *effect.* We tend to derive satisfaction from doing the things we want to do, and annoyance from doing the things we are not in the mood to do. This is the law of *readiness.*

It is not our purpose in the above discussion to condemn all compulsion on the part of teachers or parents to get children to go about their educational business. There may be many times when such compulsion is necessary. Such compulsion may often overcome an initial inertia. What we do wish to emphasize is that unless it succeeds in putting the matter over on the pupil's own initiative and purpose, the chances for success are not very good.

All of this but reëmphasizes the necessity of making our education life-centered. When the activity becomes the pupil's own, engaged in because he has a purpose in view to which it contributes, then the furtherance of that purpose constitutes success for him. What he learns in the interest of that purpose is the thing which he will remember.

4. *By-products.*—The various ways through which learning takes place are affecting the pupil all the time. When a teacher attempts to lead his pupils to an understanding of the tabernacle in the wilderness, they may learn a good deal less about the tabernacle than he purposes they should, but it is a safe assumption that they learn many other things which are not in the teacher's plan. Pupils learn not simply from what the teacher

says, but from what he *is*. They learn from other pupils. They learn from their surroundings. The whole church school hour is fraught with learning opportunities. There are *by-products* which may be more important than anything consciously taught.

The teacher must keep in mind the whole learning situation of his pupils and not simply the things he is consciously trying to teach. If in drilling his pupils in a knowledge of the Bible he at the same time develops in them a hearty dislike for the Book, his very purpose has been defeated. A few examples will serve to illustrate this principle of by-products and the need for our having regard for it.

John was taken regularly to church by his parents. There was never any question about his going. They did not try to stimulate his interest in the church, but simply compelled his attendance. When John left home for college, he left off attending church. While his parents were conscientiously thinking that they were establishing in him the habit of church-going, he was actually developing a mind set against the church. That was the lesson he was learning.

A group of young people were gathering for the first meeting of the year, many of them for the first time in their lives in this church. The superintendent spoke to them about the serious attention which this church proposed to give to religious education, and endeavored to enlist their support in the school. But the hymn books which had been passed out to these young people were soiled, torn, and had many pages missing. These books were teaching a lesson just as surely as the superintendent, and the effect of that lesson was the opposite of what the superintendent tried to create. What

success can we have, even if by word of mouth we teach that the Sunday school is a real school, if in lesson material, equipment, and preparation of teachers we belie our own words? How can we teach an appreciation of beauty, if the very place into which we ask children to come screams out ugliness?

A famous leader once said "The shortest road to hell is through a disorderly Sunday school!" Perhaps this is a strong statement. What this speaker had in mind was that no matter how well the lesson itself may be taught, the pupil is not going to learn reverence for the House of God and the Bible, or respect for the rights and privileges of others, unless the atmosphere in which he works will help him to learn these things. Many a Sunday school is so lax in discipline as to make almost impossible the teaching of the finer virtues in Christian living. Here is an example. One of the girls in a Junior Department was uncommonly large for her age. You may be sure that she was very sensitive on the subject. The pupils in her class took great delight in teasing her about her physical condition. The teacher did not like the attitude they took, but considered it none of her business and did not interfere. She was trying to teach the laws of love, but the practice of her pupils was the opposite of her teaching. The girl in question soon dropped out of Sunday school, and we may be sure that though the attempt had been made to teach her the rudimentary lessons of brotherhood and Christian fellowship, what she actually learned was to look upon the church as a place of snobbery and discourtesy. The spirit which pervades your student body is often a more powerful teacher of attitudes than any teacher in the classroom.

## Conclusion

We are thinking of the curriculum of religious education as the total experience utilized by the church school for helping pupils in learning to live the Christian life. There are certain attitudes, certain habits and skills, and certain knowledge which we want the pupil to build into his life and character. Our curriculum must not take account simply of this *content* but also the *method* whereby it may best enter vitally into the pupils' experience. The prepared lesson material which church schools use may give some guidance to the best method to employ. At best, however, the lesson maker can only suggest possible approaches. It is the teacher who must work out ways to use these prepared materials which will secure the desired results.

Our discussion on how children learn has been introduced to give teachers a clue in selecting an appropriate method. Knowing that much is learned through everyday activity should convince the teacher that he must lay hold on the child's ongoing experience. He should find in this a rich background in life situations out of which his teaching may grow. He should give much thought to ways and means by which this ongoing experience may be enriched by religious interpretation. He should utilize the natural impulses for exploration, discovery, and play, and guide them in the direction of fruitful returns for character.

Knowing the power of imitation and suggestion as ways to learning should make the teacher alert to the influences which are touching his pupils. It should lead him to seek to know the home life out of which they come. It should make him zealous to bring them into wholesome association with the church group. It should

make him alert to shield them from the books, pictures, and shows which have unwholesome suggestion, and eager to bring them into touch with those which are wholesome.

Knowing something about the educational value of thinking and reasoning should make the teacher seek to utilize this in his work. This should make him eager to raise problems, to stimulate discussion, to let intriguing curiosity lead his pupils to read and investigate in library and museum, rather than emphasizing required "assignments."

Knowing the important place of direct teaching in life, he should on the one hand take thought of the importance of his message, and on the other hand be so zealous for it that he will not throw it broadcast on stony or thorny ground but sow it carefully in a well-prepared soil. Knowing the dangers and difficulties of direct teaching should make any teacher study in season and out of season how he may make his message clear, and how he may offer it at a time when the pupil has come to his own sense of need for it. To insist on this caution is not to belittle the importance of the teacher's message, but rather to enhance it.

Knowing the principles underlying what we have called direct action, practice, satisfaction, and by-products, should make these principles ready servants of the teacher in reaching the goal of his spiritual service.

### PROBLEMS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Select from your own experience some instances showing that you accepted ways of thinking and behaving from others, by suggestion, without conscious deliberation on your part.
2. Analyze your own mental processes as you face problems and see whether you can distinguish Dewey's five steps of a complete act of thought.

3. Which of the five steps in a complete act of thought offers the greatest teaching opportunity?

4. Make note of some instances illustrating how little children misunderstand the meaning which adults try to convey to them in words.

5. Compare the elements which Kilpatrick gives as being present whenever we meet a new situation with the characteristics which he gives to describe the project method. Do you see any connection?

6. Observe a department assembly or a class session and make note of the things you think the pupils are learning but which the teacher is not consciously trying to teach (by-products).

7. President Garfield once defined a school as "A log with a boy at one end of it and Mark Hopkins at the other." What do you think he was trying to emphasize by this definition?

8. In *Peder Victorious* an incident is related of how the young Peder in school one day got so interested when an older class was being catechised in the story about Jesus walking on the water, that he blurted out without thinking, "I'd like to know what kind of boots he had on that time." The teacher punished him severely. Do you see any way in which he might have used the incident in a constructive way?

9. In learning a new hymn, is it better to learn first the music and then the words, or is it better to learn words and music together by singing? Which of the principles of learning applies to this case?

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

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## CHAPTER VI

## THE USE OF SUBJECT-MATTER

"I learn them the Bible!" So spoke Miss Bixler at the conclusion of a discussion in the meeting of Junior teachers. The discussion had centered around the adoption of a curriculum built on the life needs of the Junior boys and girls. And while her grammar may not have been above reproach, there was no mistaking her meaning! To this teacher, the sum total of the teaching of religion consisted in giving the pupil a knowledge of the Bible.

This teacher does not stand alone in this conviction. It is safe to say that a majority of church members think of the church school as a place in which the Bible is taught and learned. And why not? Have we not spoken of it as a Bible school? Is not the Bible our great book of religious literature? If not the Bible, what then shall we teach?

On the other hand we may distinguish a group of those who lay emphasis on life values as the center of religious education. They have less to say about the importance of the Bible. "We teach the pupil!" is their watchword. They point with pride to the fact that their approach is "life-centered." They call our attention to the fact that in all our effort to teach the Bible, very few of those who have attended the church school all their lives can pass an adequate test to show that they have really learned the Bible. "Teach them to *live*," they say "and they will learn more of the Bible than when you attempt to teach the Book only."

If there is any fundamental difference between these two points of view, it is one of approach rather than one of purpose. The first group is not interested in a verbal knowledge only. The second group is not interested in experience only. Both are most concerned with the Christian character of the pupil. The first group sees the importance of right knowledge as guidance to conduct. The second sees the importance of taking into account the present experience of the learner in order that knowledge may be offered intelligently and with purpose. It would seem that each group emphasizes a value which will be truly realized only when placed side by side with that emphasized by the other.

### Experience and Knowledge

The question which we are facing is that of the place which shall be held in religious education by the Bible and other subject matter. We have developed the point of view that experience shall be central in the curriculum. The older emphasis was on acquiring knowledge. If we mean by knowledge a body of subject-matter selected by adults because they think it is important, irrespective of the present interests or needs of the child, then these two views stand directly opposed to one another. Between the experience of the child and subject-matter as often presented there is a great gulf fixed. But need there be this contrast between experience and knowledge? For any individual, is there not a close relation between his knowledge and his experience? What, after all, is experience?

When a person is *experiencing,* he is in active relation with his environment. He is responding to situations. He is endeavoring to achieve a result, and in turn is undergoing the consequences of his acts. Only when

the self is active can there be experience. It is not something which may be handed over to a person by others. When a person thus responds to his environment, the activity has a certain meaning for him. It leaves an effect on his mind and organism. The experience is conserved as knowledge, attitudes, or habits. The person has learned. He is never again the same. What he has learned becomes a part of the self and enters as a factor into every new experience. A few illustrations will help to make this process clear.

A young child is given a rattle. He responds to this new situation by handling the toy, and upon giving it a certain vigorous shake, finds that it gives out what is (for him) a pleasant sound. He has actively responded to his environment. He has undergone certain consequences of his acts, that is, he has heard the sound which pleased him. The experience has meaning for him—something that will make a nice noise. Thereafter upon receiving the rattle, he responds at once by shaking it. He applies in new experience that which he has learned.

A young man was much oppressed by the contemplation of the fate which seemed inevitable for his nation. He went into the temple to pray. In the intensity of his emotion, he saw the Lord, high and lifted up. He sensed the call of the Lord for some one who would stand out and lead his people. He felt himself gripped with conviction, but was inhibited from yielding himself because of his own sense of unworthiness. This was followed by the experience of being made clean and purified as a fit servant of the Lord. As he heard the Lord's call "Whom shall we send and who will go for us?" he responded instantly, "Here am I; send me!"

Isaiah had placed himself actively into relationship with his environment, human and divine. He underwent a great experience of God's answer to his prayer. His life underwent a change because of this great experience of God. He found in it a richness and a depth of meaning. Throughout his long career, Isaiah was sustained in his ministry by this and subsequent experiences of God. His knowledge of his call by God and of the sacredness of his mission grew out of a great religious experience and influenced him in all his subsequent experience.

The relation between a person's experience and the knowledge resulting from experience should now be reasonably clear. In common speech we recognize the closeness of this relation by speaking of an "experienced" teacher or an "experienced" cook when we mean that he has knowledge that he has gained by experience. But an equally large problem looms before us now.

What may be the relation to *my* experience of the knowledge which others have gained by *their* experience? To what extent may a person profit by the experience of others and avoid the tedious process of gaining knowledge by his own first-hand experience? How, in brief, may Isaiah's experience of God be of help to me in my religious life?

There is a story by Charles Lamb which has often struck me as a particularly appropriate illustration, not only of how knowledge grows out of experience, but also of how the experience of one person may be utilized by others. I refer to his "Dissertation on the Origin of Roast Pig." Ages ago, when mankind ate their meat raw because they had not yet learned the art of cooking, the swineherd Ho-ti, in the land of China, went to

the woods one day to collect mast for his hogs, having left his cottage in the charge of his boy Bo-bo. The boy being fond of playing with fire, let some sparks escape into the straw on the floor, which, kindling quickly, soon spread the fire to every part of the flimsy shack, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage, a litter of nine pigs, the chief possession of the family, perished. Bo-bo was in utmost consternation, and while he was thinking what he would say to his father, wringing his hands over the remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, he stooped down to feel if there were still any signs of life. In doing so, he burnt his fingers and immediately put them into his mouth to cool them. Some of the roasted flesh had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life, and in the history of man, he tasted roast pig.

Bo-bo quickly surrendered himself to his new-found pleasure, and gorged himself with great mouthfuls. In the meantime Ho-ti returned, and seeing what had happened, began to rain blows on the boy's shoulders. Bo-bo did not heed the blows, but only shouted "The pig, father, eat! Good!" Ho-ti was horror-struck at such barbarous manifestations in his son, but having taken hold on a morsel, burned his fingers, and putting them in his mouth to cool them, discovered the taste of roast pig even as his son had done. He too began to gorge himself, and the two did not stop until they had devoured the entire lot of nine pigs. Bo-bo was strictly enjoined to keep the matter a secret for fear of the wrath of their neighbors at their attempt at improving on the good meat which God had sent them.

Nevertheless, the matter leaked out. Again and again Ho-ti's house burned down, until finally, seeking to

know the cause of so many calamities, the neighbors spied on him and discovered the secret. Father and son were hauled into court for trial and their punishment would surely have been severe had not the entire jury fallen before the lure of roast pig through inspecting a sample brought into court as evidence. Thereafter there were so many houses burned throughout the land that the insurance companies were forced into bankruptcy. Pigs and building material soared in prices. Then one day a genius discovered that the deliciousness of roast pig in no way depended on the firing of houses but could be brought about just as readily by means of fire made of scraps of driftwood.

We have here an illustration of how an unexpected bit of knowledge grew out of Bo-bo's experience with fire, and how in turn it affected his entire future experience in relation to foodstuffs. We have an illustration also of how the knowledge of Bo-bo and Ho-ti was appropriated by their neighbors and used to advantage in their culinary problems, without the necessity on their part of going through the process of discovery. We have, finally, an illustration of how the discovery of one person that a driftwood fire will serve just as well for roasting meat as a burning house, quickly spread throughout the country and served the needs of all without the necessity on their part of making the same discovery.

It need not be argued that the knowledge gained from experience by one person can be appropriated for use by another. A matter of such common observation is accepted by all. The religious experience of Isaiah may become of great assistance to a young man facing the challenge of a life-work of sacrifice and service. Through

such means as conversation, the printed page, the radio, and pictures we appropriate daily the knowledge which thousands of others have gained through experience. Because of all the facilities for contact with the world of ideas and of things, the knowledge of a twelve-year-old child today may in many ways be broader than that of an average man a century ago.

If it were not for the existence of knowledge as recorded or unrecorded past experience, every living person would have to learn everything by his own experience. Under such conditions no education would be possible in the sense of the enrichment and control of life situations by the experience of others. No progress would be possible, for we would not be able to profit by the experience of others. The inestimable value of the race heritage to the progress of civilization is readily apparent. Through it we may short-cut much of our own discovery of knowledge, and use for the control of our own situations what has already been discovered by others.

But this is not to say that the knowledge of others may be transferred to us without conscious effort on our part. The value of knowledge lies in the fact that it helps us in the control of the situations which we are facing. It enhances our own experience. The knowledge of how to roast meat came to a people already concerned with food problems. The religious experience of Isaiah is most useful in the experience of one who is himself seeking to find the guidance of God in his life. Thus we see again that it is the need of the learner which is the test of what knowledge will be of interest and use to him. In short, if the cumulative experience of the race which has been preserved as

knowledge is to be of value to us, we must *re-experience* it. We must relive it in our own experience. The interaction of the accumulated experience of others with the experience of the self is nicely illustrated in the preparation of a doctor. The medical student is expected to master the most important available knowledge about the human body, supported by a direct laboratory study of the body itself. This is not all. We do not account him a good doctor until he has had experience of his own which demonstrates that he can use his knowledge in the cure of actual cases of illness. No man could become a good doctor by learning from his own experience only. Nor could anyone become a good doctor by learning only the experience of others. There must be a wholesome combination of the two.

It is one of the characteristics of man that he can live himself into the experience of others and relive it with them in imagination. On page 69 we related the story of a boy who was reading a book about knights, and as he was reading he was also living in that far-away land and time. To him the incidents were almost as vivid as if he himself had been one of the principal characters. This ability to dramatize in imagination the events which took place in history or are represented in literature, offers one of the most fruitful avenues of education. The use of the story is based upon it. Through this imaginative dramatization of a problem, the pupil may be led to see its factors in their true relationship. The story of Nathan and David is a classical example. After David had committed himself to the line of justice which should be taken in the story the prophet told, he was led to see and acknowledge that he was the guilty man.

Not all of human knowledge is, however, recorded in the form of narrative. Much of it is in statements of abstract truths which have grown out of a vast number of specific experiences. Such abstract summaries serve as a form of shorthand whereby past experience may be translated into present usefulness. The thing which we have not always clearly recognized is that, unless the pupil of today can through reliving the experience which has gone into the make-up of such general principles see their real significance, they are of no great value to him in guiding his own experience. The spelling rule "*i* before *e*, except after *c*, or when sounded like *a* as in *neighbor* and *weigh*" is an ever present help in time of trouble, but it has no meaning until the learner has an experience of confronting the words which called it into being. "Honesty is the best policy" is no guide in conduct until the learner has built meaning into the word "honesty" through many specific experiences in which it applies, and has clearly seen the consequences of following any other policy. "God is love" is a statement of truth growing out of a rich experience of the love of God in human life, but we must not expect it to mean the same to the child that it does to the adult saint who has passed through many instances of the manifestations of God's love.

### What Is Subject-Matter?

This extended discussion on the relation of knowledge and experience has been offered so that we might more clearly see what is the place of subject matter in the curriculum. We are now in a position to see what we mean by subject-matter. Hold in mind the idea that the curriculum consists of the experience of the pupil under guidance. Subject-matter, then, is the means

which the pupil utilizes, under the guidance of the leader, to bring about an enrichment of his experience, and to bring it under his control so that he may realize his Christian objectives.

Let us suppose that a boy desires to go to a summer camp. This presents a situation. What is the subject-matter which he may utilize in finding the right response? (1) He may analyze the situation in order to see the factors in true relation to each other. Camp offers a good time; it will help him become a better leader in his department; it may help him solve some of his life problems. On the other hand, camp costs money; he is needed on his father's farm during those two weeks; he is still young compared to other boys who go to camp; if he goes he will have to give up getting that radio he has been saving for. (2) He may call on his own past experience for help in the problem. He once went out on an over-night camp with his class and had the time of his life; he has met the camp director and would like to spend more time with him; last year the farm work was not so urgent at the time of the camp; his father is always willing for him to have the advantage of the best opportunities. (3) He may draw on the past experience (knowledge) of others. This is to be found in unwritten form in the memory of persons he knows, or recorded in books, magazines, pictures, and other forms of record. He may talk the matter over with those who went to camp the year before; he may consult his father; he may read the catalogue of the camp; he may study the railroad schedules, and the map; if he is interested in the natural formation of the country, he may read about the location of the camp in his geography and books on geology.

In this analysis we have followed the classification of subject-matter made by W. C. Bower, in what he has called (1) the elements that enter into the situation itself; (2) the past experience of the learner; (3) the experience of others.[1] We have usually thought of subject-matter as consisting only of recorded knowledge resulting from past experience. Yet these other elements hold an important place in any learning situation. It is not so much that we have ignored them as that we have taken them for granted without naming them by the name of subject-matter.

The third element in subject-matter has been called by Professor Bower *historical subject-matter.* It may exist in the memory of living persons or be recorded in the form of literature, art, history, science, architecture and other forms of record. Because others around him have had experiences which he has not had, the individual may profit by their advice, as when the boy gets the help of his father in building a sled. Because the important experience of the race has been recorded in books, we may benefit by what happened almost anywhere at any time, as when we seek to understand the fall of Rome through a study of history during the first few centuries of the Christian Era.

In describing the way in which subject-matter emerges from experience, we cannot do better than to quote a paragraph from Bower:

> The essential character of historical subject-matter lies in the fact that it is a record of racial experience. At one time every bit of historical subject-matter belonged to the first or second elements in subject-matter; namely, to the factors in the situations themselves or to the past experience of persons in respond-

[1]Bower, W. C., *The Curriculum of Religious Education.* 1925, pp. 172-174. Used by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers and owners of the copyright.

ing to those situations. Knowledge, however, that proved successful in the satisfactory completion of responses was seized upon, communicated to others, and handed down from one generation to another. At first these traditions were wholly oral; later, when writing was invented, they became permanent in the form of literary records. In time the invention of printing not only rendered these traditions permanent but increased their accuracy and facilitated their use on a widespread scale. It has been by the gradual process of accretion that the content of every one of the present bodies of science has been built up. Textbooks on science are, in reality, notebooks recording observations and experiments, with results and procedures. History is nothing more than a record of those significant experiences through which various human groups and the race itself have passed. Literature and art are the accumulated expression in forms of enduring beauty of the best that men have thought and felt. Philosophy is an articulate record of man's intellectual struggle to find meaning and consistency in his world. Institutions are, for the most part, inarticulate records of social experiments in the conduct of life.[2]

## Subject-Matter in the Curriculum

Knowledge grew out of the successful meeting of situations. It was preserved because it proved of value in guiding others in meeting similar situations. One who has visited Jerusalem may give much sound advice —either orally or in writing—to another who is about to journey thither. One who has successfully met a moral situation is in a strategic position to advise another facing a similar situation. One who through a wealth of experience has come to a certainty of the reality of God in his life is in a position to lead another who is struggling for a similar experience. The origin and nature of knowledge (subject-matter) gives us at once a clue to its proper use in education. Subject-

[2]Bower, W. C., *The Curriculum of Religious Education.* 1925, pp. 194-195. Used by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers and owners of copyright.

matter is of highest importance in the curriculum. But it derives its importance because of its relation to present experience. It is of no more value apart from life needs and interests than a monkey wrench has value apart from machinery. The monkey wrench may be of great value to a mechanic who has daily need for fastening and loosening bolts, but utterly useless to a Hottentot who would not know what a bolt is were he to see one.

The problem of supplying adequate subject-matter in the curriculum without making it an end rather than a means is one of the most difficult in education. There is so much to be learned which has value. The child is so immature in his knowledge and experience. It is so hard to draw the line between the use of subject-matter as meeting life needs, and its use as so much stuff to be "gotten across." It is so much easier to test the child on his knowledge than on his control of conduct and enrichment of experience. It has traditionally "been done that way." These are some of the facts which will stand in the way of the teacher who would accept the lead of the best educational theory.

The problem is made more complex by the fact that any printed curriculum must deal largely in subject-matter. The lesson writer cannot know the experience of the groups for whom he is writing. Only in a very general way may he present such subject-matter as would seem to him to have value. But what is to prevent the teacher from teaching this text-material, rich as it may be, as so much *stuff* without reference to the experience of the pupils in *his* group? The answer must necessarily be, nothing but the teacher himself! In the final analysis it is the teacher who must guarantee, on

the one hand that the course will be life-centered, and on the other hand that it will provide ample and rich subject-matter to stimulate religious growth.

To make this task of the teacher easier, many curriculum units are being developed along the line of "method-guides." It is assumed that the teacher must take final responsibility for developing the course so as to meet the needs of his group, and the effort is made to help him in every possible way in doing this. Suggestions are made for ways of discovering religious needs, for pupil enterprises leading into desirable experience, for sources of fruitful materials to guide and enrich present experience. Source materials are offered for the use of both teacher and pupil, but not as so many pages to be covered, but in direct relation to definite life needs. The neatly bound textbook which was intended to be learned from cover to cover is replaced by a manual of guidance to specific problems and interests. It would be unfair to the reader if we did not suggest that there are many apparent difficulties in this new approach. Let us not fall into the error of expecting our teachers to make bricks without straw. On the other hand, once let them get this viewpoint of finding subject-matter at many sources beyond the lesson book or quarterly—in the past experience of pupils, in the experience of parents, through observation, in newspapers, in magazines, in the movies, in the public library—and a surprising new vigor will flow into the learning process.

It is sometimes assumed that the point of view here presented minimizes the importance of *knowledge*. Nothing could be further from the truth. If the experience-centered curriculum is allowed to degenerate into a mere discussion of or talking about experience, without

an effort to find the best available resources for guidance and enrichment of that experience, then we are depriving our children of an inheritance which is rightly theirs. The emphasis in the new curriculum is not on more knowledge or less knowledge, but on what Professor Betts has called *fruitful* knowledge. That moral knowledge is an important element in right conduct has been clearly revealed by character tests. An understanding of the implications of the Christian Gospel for social living is a necessary element in Christian character. There are too many persons whose Christian conduct is as inconsistent as that of the plumber whose religion would not permit him to fix a leak on Sunday even though it was flooding his customer's basement, but on Monday had no compunctions of conscience about palming off a shoddy piece of work for the price of a good one. Far from passing lightly over the place of knowledge in education, the new curriculum seeks to assure that the very best religious knowledge is brought into vital relation to present-day problems of religious living.

Will the principle of education in life situations lead to such a broad conception of the place of knowledge in the curriculum? If we regard situations as meaning only immediately present problems, *No.* If we include in situations the large inclusive problems involved in living, *Yes.* Soares has given us a significant discussion of this point:

> The child-centered curriculum is inadequate if it means that we will study the child and find what he needs, for this would give him only the satisfaction of his evident wants and the solution of his manifest problems. Education is the creation of needs and of problems; it is the lure of the young adventurer

into experienceable knowledge; it is the stimulation of desires which never spontaneously occur.

The protest against knowledge for its own sake, knowledge as curriculum material, is entirely healthy; but the remedy is not to regard knowledge as merely stuff to be used in the solution of immediate problems, but to estimate the experience quality of any body of knowledge and consider its value for the enlargement of life. There is a certain sense in which knowledge says to us, "I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it abundantly."

Perhaps most of the difference of view turns upon the use of the term "problem." It is a most valuable concept if we employ it with Dewey as indicating the fundamental nature of the thought process. But it must not be limited to the current difficulties that arise in daily living. Nor must we think that knowledge is principally useful for clearing up some practical confusion. If we recognize that our large, inclusive problem is how to live in relation with our fellows, in understanding and sympathy with man in all times and in all places; how to appreciate all that man has done and thought and can do; how to live on our planet and in our universe and with all Reality, then, of course, knowledge-seeking is always problem-solving.[3]

## Using the Bible

We have shown in the foregoing discussion that subject-matter includes many types of past experience of the individual and the race. In this section we shall limit our consideration to the use of the Bible as subject-matter of religious education. We are making this limitation for three reasons: (1) because it will simplify the discussion to think of one type of subject-matter only, (2) the Bible is the great textbook of religious education, (3) most of the conflict between the new and the old in religious education has centered about the use of the Bible. If we can come to an understanding of the way in which the Bible is to be used in religious

[3] Soares, Theodore Gerald, *Religious Education.* 1928, pp. 124-125. Reprinted by permission of the University of Chicago Press.

education, we shall have mastered the whole question of subject-matter and the curriculum.

The Bible holds a pre-eminent place as a record of religious experience. It records the cumulative religious knowledge and experience of a great people as they searched after God. It culminates in the life and teachings of our Lord and Master, and the interpretation of him which his followers made. It has grown out of a living, throbbing experience of religious realities and values. It is, however, a *record* of religious experience, and does not take the place of experience itself until it is made to relive in the experience of the men and women of each generation. This characteristic it shares with all subject-matter. To teach the Bible as a printed record without assuring its entering vitally into experience is no more likely to succeed than to teach rules of courtesy from a book without relating them to the situations in the group which call for courteous conduct. Problems of religious faith and conduct are among the most insistent and most universal which humankind faces. Because the Bible stands so pre-eminent as a record of the religious experience of men and women of religious genius, it is so readily assimilated as guidance in the religious problems of today. It is not irreverent to say that we use the Bible so largely in religious education, not just because it is the Bible, but because it possesses such unique qualities for stimulus and guidance to the religious life. And this is but to say that the Bible holds its unchallenged place in the hearts and lives of Christian men and women because its value has been proved to them through experience. Every Christian could attest to the truth of Matthew Arnold's fine tribute: "To the Bible men will return because they

cannot do without it; because happiness is our end and aim, and happiness belongs to righteousness, and righteousness is revealed in the Bible. For this simple reason men will return to the Bible just as a man who tried to give up food, thinking it was a vain thing and he could do without it, would return to food; or a man who tried to give up sleep, thinking it was a vain thing and he could do without it, would return to sleep.''

We may distinguish three different ways of using the Bible in the curriculum of religious education. Each has its place, and each should come in for a fair share of attention in the church school:

1. The first type of use is that growing out of the ''project'' or ''enterprise'' approach. In the preceding chapter we discussed this as the method whereby learning normally takes place. All knowledge grew originally out of enterprises in which men engaged. It finds its place in facilitating new enterprises in which other men may embark. When Johnny desires to build a sled it is useful to him to know what other people have learned about the properties of snow, wood, and other factors in his problem. He himself will most quickly learn about these factors through using in his own situation what others have found out. It makes the knowledge most real to him. When Mary is bothered about the meaning of faith, she will be helped by knowing what others have thought on the subject, particularly if that thinking grew out of experience. She will learn these facts most readily as she is trying to think the problem through for herself. They will, under these circumstances, help her most in coming to her own attitudes and practices in the matter of faith.

The project type of procedure is finding a larger place in our church schools each year. Those who use it do so because they know that Christian living can best be taught through having the pupils actually engage in enterprises in Christian living, under guidance. In the course of carrying out such an enterprise, there will be need for subject-matter as a guide in the activity, and teacher and pupil may share in the search for truth. For example, in discussing the meaning of Thanksgiving a class comes to the conclusion that they should express the spirit of sharing by preparing a basket for a needy family. Obviously this involves a normal life activity, for Christian service is an activity in which every Christian will engage again and again. Immediately the class has need for information in the carrying out of this enterprise. Where are the needy families? What do they need most? Why does this condition of need exist? How can we present our gift without embarrassment either on their part or on ours? What are some of the principles which should guide our service activities? The class members would not, of course, think of all these problems at once. Herein lies the task of the teacher, to make this enterprise just as rich as possible. Inevitably they will be led back to the teachings of Jesus and other parts of the Bible for guidance in the right attitude toward these needs, and in the right spirit of giving.

A teacher of high school boys undertakes to change the attitudes of pupils on the matter of prayer. They have always joined in the prayers of the church school —in a perfunctory manner. They would without second thought say that prayer is a good thing. But, as a matter of fact, prayer has meant very little in their ex-

perience. Coming before the class one morning the teacher speaks somewhat as follows: "You have just joined in a worship service. Your leader prayed for certain things and by your attitude you joined him in that prayer. As you did so, did you expect God to answer your prayer? Does God always answer prayer? If not, under what circumstances may we expect him to answer prayer?"

Very likely their previous training will lead them to say that God does answer prayer. If they are inclined to give this answer without further thought he may stimulate thought by a problem like this: "There were two football teams about to face each other in a game. The members of each of the teams prayed before the game that God would give them the victory. God could not give both teams victory. How could he answer the prayers of both?"

By this time a lively discussion will no doubt have been stimulated. Under careful guidance the boys will soon discover that they do not know enough about their subject to come to any definite conclusions. This will naturally lead to an investigation of sources from which further information may be gained. The teacher will direct them to the Bible and make particular references to its teachings on prayer. He will give attention to the prayer life of Jesus. He will refer them also to books which have been written to interpret the prayer experience. He will bring to their attention the experience of godly men and women. He will ask them to look back into their own past experience.

In the course of this study various attempts might be made to formulate a satisfactory answer to the problem. Whether or not they finally agree on a given solution,

every member of the class will have had an opportunity to make a thorough study of the matter of prayer under the guidance of a wholehearted purpose, and will without question have formed new and better attitudes toward prayer. He will have benefited by the experience of others (i.e., subject-matter) in a perfectly normal way.

It is a mistake to assume that the teacher is always in possession of the subject-matter needed in any situation and serves as a mediator to make it available to the pupil. At best he is but the experienced guide who may point out to his pupils the directions in which interesting explorations may be made. He can but help the pupil to analyze the factors in his situation, to search his past experience for data, to find the way to historical sources. The only thing which he possesses as his own peculiar contribution is his own past experience. With younger children and in simpler situations it is true that much of the subject-matter may be provided by the teacher. In more complex problems the teacher can but share with his pupils in the search for truth. The sociologist searching with his class for a solution to the great social problems, the research specialist searching with his group for a cure of cancer, are examples of this latter class.

2. The second general type of use of the Bible in the curriculum is followed when the selection of material is made by the leader on the basis of a real need in the lives of his pupils, but when the need may not at the outset be obvious to the pupils themselves. It is not necessary that in every instance a life-situation recognized as such by the pupils be the starting point. Sometimes the subject-matter itself may be the best guide for

leading the pupil to a recognition of his situation, at the same time that it helps him to meet it in a Christian way. The material presented may *dramatize* the situation in such a way as to secure commitment to the right outcome, when such fair-minded consideration could not be secured if the situation were approached directly. Jesus frequently spoke in parables rather than addressing himself directly to the situation before him.

In my own teaching experience the following incident will bear on this point: I opened my class one morning by relating the case of a girl who voluntarily paid her fare on the trolley car, though the conductor had missed her in making his rounds. I asked for similar cases which might have come to the attention of the pupils or happened in their lives. I got them! Most of them were told vividly, and with very evident approval of the person who could "beat" his way, and disdain for the girl who voluntarily paid her fare. So pronounced was this attitude that it became impossible for me to secure an impartial consideration of the right Christian conduct in such cases. If I had started more indirectly and first secured commitment to a principle of honesty to govern in such cases, and then brought these cases in for judgment by that principle, I would have had a far more effective lesson. A Bible approach might have accomplished this, and been no less life-centered. (It should be said for the procedure in the case cited that it gave me an insight into the situation of these boys and girls which might not have been revealed if the general principles governing such cases had first been set up.)

How often we have found it true in our own experience that a story, a sermon, a Bible passage, has

called to our attention situations which would not otherwise have been recognized at all as problems or interests. A study of modern social problems may lead to a study of Amos, but just as often a study of the clear pronouncements of Amos leads to a consideration of modern social problems. Let us not overlook the fact, though, that the leader must see from the beginning a very definite life need for the purpose of meeting which his subject-matter was selected, and that the pupil must at some point in the procedure see the application to his situations. The present writer would maintain that the endeavor to raise a problem through conversation, discussion, or problem-cases, for every consideration which a class is to undertake, is fraught with possibilities for very artificial procedures. Better were it in many cases to go to the heart of the material at the start and let the relation to life come as the study proceeds.

Under this general head we would consider the place of the fine arts in the curriculum. There are some artistic souls whose very natures demand that they learn all about music, art, poetry, and the other fine arts. With most of us, however, those things are seen in relation to our experience and appreciated only after someone has shown us their meaning. Yet who would drop the riches of culture which art may give to life from the experience of men?

3. The third general approach is that which endeavors to give an acquaintance with the Bible for its own sake, with only a secondary reference to its value as a guide in conduct problems. We would maintain that there is not only a place for this kind of study, but also that no religious education is complete without it. Is it not true that the Bible is a very present fact in the

experience of most people? They hear it read in church. They have it in their homes. They find references to it in literature. They hear it quoted as a moral and spiritual authority. They read books about it. It gives them the story of Jesus. Who would say that a course which sets out to give an acquaintance with the Bible is not life-centered? On the contrary, a curriculum which seeks to deal with life interests and needs in a broad way cannot ignore the systematic study of the Bible—its origin, nature, message, and meaning for modern life. Because of this universal interest, the Bible may under many situations be its own best approach to a study of itself.

One of the objectives of religious education which we set for ourselves at the beginning was the development of persons who would be able and willing to participate constructively in the life of the church. The Bible is inseparably united with the Christian church, and anyone who would be efficient in its worship and work must know how to use the Bible. From the viewpoint of this objective alone we should be negligent in our work if we did not include as one of the activities in our curriculum such use of the Bible as will lead to thorough acquaintance with it.

### PROBLEMS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is it that a savage group perpetuates savagery while a civilized group perpetuates civilization?

2. Are hymns subject-matter? How may they be used in the curriculum in harmony with the principles laid down in this chapter?

3. Consider the use of the Bible in your church school lesson book. Would you describe this use as "life-centered"?

4. What are some of the things which you learned in school which you feel would probably never have grown out of your felt problems?

5. Show how the teaching of the Twenty-third Psalm may grow out of a life situation or need.

6. Describe the use Jesus made of subject-matter in the incident in which he told the story of the Good Samaritan.

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

Bower, W. C., The Curriculum of Religious Education, chaps. viii; xi, pp. 171-175; xiii. Scribner's, 1925.

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## CHAPTER VII

## EDUCATIVE FACTORS IN CHURCH, HOME, AND COMMUNITY

Russel Conwell, in his charming story "Acres of Diamonds" tells of an ancient Persian named Al Hafed, who owned a very large farm and was a contented and wealthy man. One evening a Buddhist priest who was visiting Al Hafed told him of the splendor of diamonds which are to be found in some parts of the earth, and of the power of riches which would come to the man who owned but a handful of these diamonds. At once Al Hafed became discontented, for in the face of such visions of wealth he felt very poor indeed. He needs must own some diamonds! So he sold his farm and set out to find diamonds. His search carried him fruitlessly to the ends of the earth, until finally, discouraged, penniless, and in rags, he threw himself into the sea and was drowned.

In the meantime Al Hafed's successor took possession of his farm. One day when he led his camel out into the garden to drink from the clear brook, he noticed a curious flash from the sands of the shallow stream. He reached in and pulled out a stone containing a beautiful diamond. When he stirred the sands of the garden with his fingers he uncovered other and more beautiful diamonds. Al Hafed was plodding his weary way over the lands of the earth, when, on the farm that he sold, he left behind literally acres of diamonds!

"How foolish was Al Hafed!" do I hear you say? Yet was he any more so than you and I? We wonder

what we shall teach our children, when all the time there are spiritual needs which are crying aloud for help. We scour the earth that we might find a life situation and take it captive, when at our very door there are acres of life situations. We frantically rack our brains for ways of making our teaching interesting and effective, when by taking a little thought of our pupils as they are constantly living in the community all about us, we would find a richness of teaching already going on which needs but the touch of the hand of religion to make it blossom forth into a unified whole in the life abundant. An account of the educative factors which are available to the use of religious education will reveal an amazing number of helpers ready to uphold the hands of the teacher of religion.

## The Unity of Life

Life for any individual is unified around the self. It is the *I* which has an experience. *I* go to school. *I* belong to a family. *I* am a citizen of the state. The more the integration of personality can be brought about, the more the entire life can be brought under the control of the highest ideals and purposes, the nearer have we come to the Christian ideal of the life abundant. This integration of personality around the highest Christian concepts and motives is one of the cardinal objectives of religious education.

Religion is a quality of experience. It is not something which may be put on when the Sabbath comes, and put off for the rest of the week. It must permeate all other experience and give meaning and quality to it. Unless religion can do this, it has failed to reach its highest expression in the soul of man. To bring

Christ into the home, the market-place, the busy factory, upon the playground, as well as into the cathedral and church, is one of the highest ideals of religious education.

These considerations lie at the heart of the development of a Christian personality. They indicate at once the desirability of having a program of religious education which maintains a contact with all of the life of the learner. They show why we must introduce an element of unity into the curriculum itself as it comes to expression in the various phases of the church's program. Let us take a further glance at the second of these considerations.

Much is being said these days about a unified program of religious education for the local church. In the rapid development of our work in Christian teaching many agencies and organizations have come into being, each with its own program, such as Sunday school, clubs, societies, vacation school, week-day school, mission groups. All deal with the same child, however, and we have just maintained that the unity of the child's personality should be respected. Much greater results could be achieved if each of these agencies carried a certain share, properly integrated with that done by others, so that all might contribute to a cumulative development of Christian character.

This raises a serious problem in curriculum making. Concretely, how may we develop a curriculum of religious education which will take adequate account of the work of the Sunday school, clubs, and societies, the vacation school, and the week-day school? There is now much duplication of work among these agencies. The curriculum of the future must set as its task a proper

unification. This will involve very careful planning of the curriculum, in order that each agency may make its maximum contribution.

The relation of religious teaching to the activities of life, so that all may be lifted to the level of religious living, presents difficult problems and vast possibilities. The problems are difficult because to utilize these activities will require an intimate knowledge of the life of the child. The opportunities are vast because Christian personality is constantly in the process of growth. The experience of the child throughout the week is making its contribution toward such growth. If religious education will reach out into this everyday experience in order to give it a religious interpretation and guidance, it will in the most effective way accomplish its purpose.

Lest we be as blind as the man in Conwell's story, let us examine with some care the various places where the child lives his life. Let us ask what are the possibilities of each for religious education. Then let us use our resources as we build our curriculum. Much of education will be accomplished in an indirect manner. The pupil is being educated while he is least conscious of the process. The teacher will *use* the educative factors which life affords. He will arrange opportunities for learning.

Thornton Wilder in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* gives us an admirable example of education which takes advantage of learning through life activities, without employing the usual methods of the schoolroom. The Abbess Madre Maria suddenly awakens to the fact that she has not long to live and that she must make provision for the continuance of her work. Where in all Peru is there some one who could serve as a worthy suc-

cessor? She makes a rapid journey throughout her hospital, convent, and orphanage, and selects Pepita, a girl of twelve, as having most promise. Then begins Pepita's education. Amid the sensibilities and jealousies of a convent it must of necessity be accomplished without either the girl or her associates realizing the Abbess' purpose. She is assigned all kinds of duties, some of them the most disliked in the convent. Through them she learns the administration of the establishment in all its aspects. She accompanies the Abbess on many of her journeys, even though it is only in the capacity of custodian of the eggs and vegetables. At the most unexpected and seemingly accidental occasions, the older woman appears and talks to her at great length, about the doing of her work, the administration of the establishment, the management of women, Christian service, and religious experience. As a step in her education for greatness, Pepita is assigned to the Marquesa de Montemayor as a companion, so that she may have experience in her great palace. Though she does not suspect it, the Abbess is even there hovering about, estimating the stresses and watching for the moment when a burden harms and does not strengthen. What was of necessity made an education by indirection was perhaps the very best to accomplish the Abbess' purpose in making Pepita a worthy successor to her authority.

### The Church

For the child who is reared in a Christian family, the church is a very vivid and real experience. Entirely aside from its formal teaching work, the child learns from the church many lessons which help to upbuild his religious life.

While we must seek to teach the child that he can feel and know God everywhere, in a peculiar sense the church is the temple where he may draw night unto Him in worship. It stands for the spiritualization of life. It stands for the highest ideals and aspirations. It should symbolize to the child the meaning of God in human experience, and should send him into his life of seven days through the week with a consciousness of eternal values. The very fact that the church school is held in the church, which has such associations for the pupil, constitutes an educative influence. We will do well to build our curriculum in the consciousness of the values which we have right at our door in the child's experience of the church.

Miss Elizabeth McE. Shields has prepared a lesson for Beginners in the vacation church school which, in terms of the child's experience, she calls "I Go to Church."[1] The aim is to give little children a brief period of happy worship in the church auditorium where they may meet their pastor as their leader in this worship. The activity is so planned as to develop a situation through which the child will receive something that can be given by beautiful music by the church organ, arched windows, and the presence of the pastor in the pulpit. The leader tells the story of Samuel, and with this as a setting, invites the children immediately to go quietly into the church where they may hear sweet music and talk to the Heavenly Father. By previous arrangement the organist plays beautiful music as they come into the church, and the pastor is in the pulpit. As the children are quietly seated they sing together "Father, We Will Quiet Be," and are led in a Scripture reading and

[1]Shields, Elizabeth McE., *Beginners in God's World.* Westminster Press, 1928, p. 87.

prayer by the pastor. Following this brief service the children are allowed to go to the pastor's study and present him with a gift which they have made. Thus does this writer plan to utilize the experience of the church in the curriculum of religious education.

The church is more than a place. It is a society of Christians. It should provide that social atmosphere in which the child may best grow up as a Christian. We have already discussed the powerful influence on character formation which is exercised by the group with which one associates. We called this "suggestion." Growing persons are apt to think, feel, and act as those about them. In the light of this principle, what a tremendous influence may be exerted upon the development of Christian character by the church society! To feel one's self as one of a great congregation, united in spirit through common worship is one of the best conditions under which worship may take place. Just as a boy growing up in a fishing village will most normally turn to the sea as his vocation, so should he who grows up in the church turn to the Christian life without thought of any other. That all too often this higher quality of Christian living is not present in the church group cannot be denied. This does but re-emphasize the necessity of high spiritual leadership for the church which may lead Christian people out into the building of the Kingdom of God in their midst. Of churches, as of individuals, it may be said that we shall know them by what their children are.

In the church the growing person experiences his contacts with the outstanding Christian personalities of the community. He should learn to know and appreciate the pastor intimately. As the servant of God and

the man in the community who is trained in religious leadership, the pastor should be looked up to for spiritual guidance just as readily as any professional man is sought for guidance in his profession. Too long has the pastor been omitted from the program of religious education. Our program should provide for bringing him just as vitally into relation with each group of children as he is in relation with the adult groups.

In addition to the pastor, the child forms vital contacts with other Christian personalities, such as the teacher of his church school class, the leaders of worship and other activities. Much has been said by way of eulogy of teachers. The influence which is exerted by one personality on other personalities is undoubted. That what the teacher *is* determines the effectiveness of what he says cannot be denied. As these words are being written, we have just had the beautiful example of a President of the United States at his inaugural insisting that one of his early teachers be on the platform with him. Thus has he symbolized our honor for our teachers.

Let us return for just a moment to the discussion of how we learn by "suggestion," that is, how we tend to take on the ideas, attitudes, and habits of others without conscious or deliberate acceptance. It is this which will explain the powerful influence of other personalities on us. There are two factors in suggestion which operate to make the teacher's influence effective. One of these is that we are most apt to be influenced through suggestion by those who have a certain prestige in our eyes. When our hero bows reverently during prayer we are apt to come quickly to the point of view that it is just the thing for us to do also, while we will likely

not even notice the prayer attitude of one who holds no special place in our regard. The other is that suggestion is most effective when a person is uncritical toward its source and content. If we have developed a distaste for a certain hymn we are less open to being influenced by another's attitude toward it than if we have never seen it before. The younger the child the less critical is he likely to be because he has not yet built up a wide background of experience against which to evaluate his new experiences. Moreover, the younger the child the more prestige will the leader of his group hold in his eyes.

In the church the pupil will have his first experience of the sacraments. Out of this experience may grow rich opportunities for the interpretation of the Christian life and message. How rarely have we utilized these opportunities! Most teachers have perhaps been embarrassed by having pupils ask why certain things are done in the church, rather than seizing such questions as opportunities for effective teaching. John L. Lobingier, in his book, *Our Church,* has planned a lesson around the sacrament of baptism, and one around the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In each case his suggestion is that the lesson should grow out of the practice of the church. Such discussion may readily be stimulated, and will lead into a consideration of the underlying meaning of these rites. Suggestions are made for leading the discussion into the historical background for these sacraments, and particularly to references in the Bible. A teacher of Intermediates reports that when, because of a disciplinary problem with his boys, he decided to approach his class from the standpoint of having them list the questions they would

most like to discuss, one of the first they named was a study of the meaning of the sacraments. When his work was placed on the basis of such pupil interests, the problem of discipline vanished.

In the church the child comes into contact in a normal way with the materials of worship. The Scriptures, the great hymns, the psalms, sacred music, prayers, form a part of his experience in the church. This should lead to a natural development of attitudes of appreciation, and to a measure of familiarity growing out of use. Moreover, such experiences suggest possibilities for educational activities in the church school through which the meaning of these worship materials may be enriched, and the religious life deepened. The life of the church offers a natural avenue to opening the riches of sacred literature, and interpreting the practice of the worshiping congregation.

### The Home

Horace Bushnell, in the development of his epoch-making treatise on Christian nurture, maintains that the family is such a body that a power over character is exerted therein which is entirely unconscious and undesigned. As children before birth are shaped physically in the mother's womb, so are they shaped after birth mentally and spiritually by the matrix of the social atmosphere of the house. Through what he calls "the organic unity of the family," manners, personal views, prejudices, practical motives, and the spirit of the house pass into all and pervade all, as naturally as the air they breathe. The odor of the house will always be in their garments. Modern educational research has tended to confirm the importance of Bushnell's emphasis at this point.

Much has been made of the place of the home in the development of the religious life. Perhaps these eulogies have more often been founded on sentiment than on an understanding of the educational implications. Yet it is true that the home provides the most normal and the most effective learning situation that we know. In many homes, of course, no direct religious lessons are taught. We have lamented the passing of the family altar and other forms of religious instruction. Be this as it may, the indirect educative influences, which are far more powerful, are continuing to go on every day.

In a previous chapter we discussed the important place of imitation and suggestion as factors in the learning process. Let us allow our minds to dwell for a moment on what will be the outcome for Christian living of the influence which is emanating out of the life of the average American home. What, for example, are the Christian ideals which are there lived? What kind of regard is manifested by one member for another? Is life lived in consciousness of a spiritual interpretation? What is the attitude of the home toward amusements, and in what ways does it encourage the spending of leisure time? What is the attitude toward the expression of God's love in nature? Do parents and children together share the joy of growing things in yard and garden? Is there an attempt to develop that reverence and love for God and his works which are so natural to a child, or are these great avenues of spiritual blessings closed? What is the attitude of parents toward children? Do they by word and deed indicate their conviction that children are the most important possession of the race? Do they give their chil-

dren that fellowship and companionship through which together they may learn the secrets of living, and come into a higher conception of the meaning of spiritual experience?

In a recent article, Will Durant made the following significant statement concerning the effect of the parents' example on the child's character: "Example is so powerful that if it is good, nothing else is necessary. The best home and the best school, other things equal, are those which govern least. It is remarkable how well-behaved a child can be without punishments and without commands. Where the libertarian method fails it is most often because we parents ourselves violate the rules we would have our children obey. We counsel temperance, and eat and drink to excess; we teach amiability, and quarrel publicly; we ask for gentleness loudly, and we rudely command courtesy; we advise modesty, and pose as infallible gods. But children learn by what they see us do, not by what we tell them. If they misbehave, we owe them an apology; it is very likely that they are imitating our past performances."[2]

We may ask further, what physical equipment does the home provide which will help the child in his mental and spiritual growth? What kind of books are to be found on the shelves? Is the child given an opportunity to luxuriate in the joys of good literature and fine art! Does he have among the books with which he lives daily such masterpieces for making the Bible loved as *The Master Library* and *The Book of Life?* Are the magazines which come into the home of such a nature as to inspire to better living, and to develop a taste for good reading?

[2] *American Magazine*, March, 1929.

Few of us have yet begun to realize the new aspect which home life has taken on since the coming of the radio. Through the mere turning of a dial there may be brought into the home the finest music. There may be brought lectures which are uplifting and wholesome. The family may enjoy in the comfort of its living room the finest sermons, the news of the world, and other enriching values. On the other hand, the radio may bring things which are not so uplifting. The agnostic philosopher is not a stranger to the microphone. The crank, who in the name of religion represents a God who is not at all the Father of whom Jesus taught, is given an opportunity to multiply his audiences. Perhaps it is too much to expect that the broadcasting station will do all the selecting, and present only those things which are best. A great responsibility rests upon the home itself in making its selections.

Education in the church is one of the objectives to which religious education must give more attention, so that a new generation may grow up to love and serve the church. Yet how futile is our effort in this direction unless the example of the home from which the child comes is one to cause him to grow into this attitude of love and reverence. A father and mother have an only daughter who is to become a member of the church this spring. It is a very solemn event in their home. New clothes must be purchased and the spring housecleaning must be done. The family and relatives will sit in a body in the church when the rite is consummated. They will all participate in a great dinner in honor of the daughter's new spiritual attainment. All this is very fine. It sets on a high level of appreciation the church's place in a girl's life.

But alas, even this most sincere manifestation of joy over the daughter's achievement will not serve to counteract in the girl's education the effect of the total indifference of father and mother to the church throughout the year, in both attendance and support. We must say with Bushnell, "The odor of the house will be in her garments."

We have, at another point, called attention to the necessity for close co-operation between teacher and parents. We need here but repeat that the tremendous educative influence of the home lays upon the teacher the necessity of knowing the kind of home situations out of which the pupils come. It is our purpose here to emphasize in particular the responsibility of the church for developing Christian homes in which Christian personality may develop. Is this a part of our curriculum of religious education? Most assuredly it is. One of the most rewarding tasks in which any church may engage is that of helping the parents to lift their family life to a higher religious plane. Nor is this likely to be difficult. Most parents take their responsibility toward the rearing of children seriously. They are eager for suggestions and help. The curriculum of religious education should provide courses for parents through which they may learn how better to meet their children's religious needs. There will be no problem in making the teaching life-centered, for it will concern itself directly with everyday problems of fathers and mothers. In addition to such more formal classes, the church must provide for informal helps to the home, such as may be given through the visits of the pastor, the Cradle Roll superintendent, or the church visitor, through the contacts of the church school teacher

with the parents of the children whom he teaches, and through the parish paper. If every home were thus made a school of religion, we would soon approach our high spiritual objectives. In what more rewarding task can the church spend herself?

## The School

School life provides a large segment of the experience for every growing boy and girl. Companionships, clubs, athletics, association with teachers, all are encompassed by the school experience. The school is the great common meeting ground for the children of the community, the place where rich and poor mingle together, the melting pot of the races. Next to the home, there is no place where the influence of the group is more effective in determining ideals and conduct. He who would guide the life activities of the young will do well to study them in the life of the school.

The work of the school provides a richness of life far beyond the range of the present. Through the study of history the past is caused vividly to pass in review before the mind. Through the study of geography the ends of the earth are visited in imagination and their people brought into the range of neighbors. Through the study of literature the best thought of the ages is reincarnated in the life of the present, in story, poem, biography, and essay. Through the study of social science a glimpse is had of the problems of society, and an opportunity given to see the principles on which social living must rest.

Much of this experience in the public school is making an indirect contribution to religious education. All of it has a significant bearing on a curriculum of re-

ligious education in the church school. The life of the school constitutes a portion of that total experience in which growth of character and personality is constantly taking place. Christian principles must be made to operate here as elsewhere. The subjects studied in school constitute a background against which religious teaching may be sketched. Religious teaching, in its turn, may offer a spiritual interpretation for the broadening horizon which the pupil is gaining through his school work. The curriculum of religious education cannot be centered in the experience of pupils until adequate account has been taken of their school life.

There is a more intimate way in which the curriculum of the church school may be related to that of the public school. This is at the point where the two meet on common ideals. Both public school and church school are interested in the development of character. The movement for specific emphasis on character education is rapidly gaining ground in the public school. The church on its part insists that the Christian religion is not effective in life unless it has led to righteous conduct. Since the two aim at the same thing in character development, the church school will be wise to take account in its curriculum of what the public school is doing, and be careful not to duplicate, but to supplement and fulfil.

We have used the word "fulfil" advisedly, for the church is not interested in moral education only, but always seeks to raise conduct to the level of the religious. In this it follows the practice of the Master who saw the relation of man to man always in terms of their common relation to the Father. Professor W. W. Charters says of the relation between the public school and the church school:

As I understand its meaning, religious education transcends moral education but is based upon it. Children may be taught to be moral through the use of either moral or religious sanctions. Religious education relates morality to the concept of God; moral education bases morality on the concept of good. Both develop a moral structure within the individual. Each is striving for ends which have much in common. Both seek to develop the virtues of goodness, unselfishness, courage, and industry. Public schools and church schools are co-operating agencies. Whatever of morals the public schools may develop is so much gain for the church schools. The public schools, therefore, may aid religious education by developing the basic virtues to the utmost through industry and intelligence. What they develop religious education does not need to repeat. To the extent that they develop moral habits and attitudes the task of inducing religious experience is made easier. A moral man is a better subject for religious experience than a criminal.[3]

May the public school teach religion? This question involves the most fundamental problem of the relation between the curriculum of religious education and the public school. Sectarian religion the public school cannot ever teach. But are there not some great common elements of religion on which all agree and which the public school could teach? Answers differ. The tendency has been, on the principle of separation of church and state, for the public school to avoid even all appearances of alliance with religion. But we are not so careful to eliminate religion from other phases of government. The president of the United States takes his oath of office with his hand on a Bible. Congress is opened with prayer. A legislative assembly may hear a speaker on religious topics. Have we carried this

[3]Charters, W. W., "What the Public Schools Can and Cannot Do in Religious Education," *International Journal of Religious Education*, November, 1928, p. 10. Copyrighted by the International Council of Religious Education. Used by permission.

matter of separation to an absurd extreme in the schools? Dean Weigle interprets the situation as follows:

> The principle of the separation of Church and State refers properly to separation of control. It means that neither Church nor State may rightfully control the other, wholly or in part. It stands for a free Church and a free State. But separation in control does not preclude co-operation in action. And for the State to refuse co-operation with the churches, where such co-operation is desirable, would be to commit the State to secularism, and to turn its powerful influence in the direction of non-religion and atheism. In no other of its functions does the State come closer to the churches, nor is the need of some measure of co-operation more urgent, than with respect to education. Here certainly, for the State to ignore religion is to deny it. And for the State even tacitly to deny religion in its schools is to impair the religious liberty of those who believe in God and desire their children to be educated in that faith.[4]

The elimination of religion from the public school, when at the same time its work has been broadened in scope to include almost every other human interest, holds serious consequences by what it implies for the importance of religion. In the article already referred to, Dean Weigle says on this point:

> This danger is greater today than ever before just because the public schools are greater today than ever before. For the old-time public school to omit religion would have been a matter of little consequence, for it omitted a great many things. But the public schools of today are taking on the dimensions of life itself. They undertake to afford to children a social environment simpler, purer, wider, better balanced and more rightly proportioned—to repeat Dewey's phrases—than the big, confused and too often sordid world without their bounds. They provide for the education of children in practically every other sound

[4]Weigle, Luther A., "The Relation of Church and State in Elementary Education," *International Journal of Religious Education*, November, 1928, pp. 12-13. Copyrighted by the International Council of Religious Education. Used by permission.

human interest—*except religion.* The omission and ignoring of religion by such schools conveys a powerful condemnatory suggestion.

We must keep sectarianism out of our public schools. But that does not necessitate stripping them of religion. We must not surrender the public schools to the sectarianism of atheism. If it be right to keep Methodism or Presbyterianism or Catholicism out of the schools, it is right to keep Tom-Paine-ism out. If it be wrong to establish Congregationalism or Lutheranism or Judaism as the religion of the State, it is equally wrong to establish secularism as the religion of the schools of the State. The present situation does not fully conserve, it in some respects impairs, the religious freedom of that vast majority of American citizens who believe in God and desire that the education of their children give proper place to religious faith.

When education is so intimately related to life as we have maintained throughout this discussion, it is a violation of our very principles to attempt to give religious education in a separate compartment, separated from the rest of education. Those who maintain parochial schools recognize this, and are willing to pay for the maintenance of such a separate system of schools rather than relinquish this fundamental one-ness of religious teaching with all education.

What the future may hold for religious teaching in the public school cannot now be predicted. The signs of the times seem to indicate a less rigid attitude on the part of educational leaders on the principle that all religious content must be forever eliminated from the public school. The ideal that education shall meet all the needs of life is leading to the insistent question, "What of religion?" Time may bring about tremendous changes. Religious education should welcome anything the public school will do toward the performance of the total task. It will leave the time of the religious

school the more free to do the specialized task which no common school can perform. In the meantime, let the church school face its present task and do it to its best ability. Let it take account of the many things the public schools are doing which have religious value. Let it build a curriculum of religious education which will lift all education for its pupils to the level of the religious.

### Other Community Factors

We have discussed the educative values of the life of our pupils in the various institutions in which much of their time is spent. The community outside of these institutions should also come in for a share of consideration. Leisure time, when the person does just what he most wants to do, is of particular value for character development. Much of this is spent in the utilization of such facilities as the community may afford.

The interest of boys in particular is much taken up with various recreational activities, particularly athletics. Playgrounds, streets, and even back alleys are utilized for the carrying out of whichever activity seems to appeal to the imagination at a particular season of the year. The educative value of such activity lies not only in the actual participation in the play itself, but also in the associations which it affords with others who are playing. It is here that the influence of the gang operates. Much has been said about the educative value of play. Let us be clear on one point. Play in itself does not necessarily lead to character development. It may be either uplifting or detrimental. It is the opportunity which play activities afford for normal life activities in which Christian principles may be applied, and from which Christian attitudes, ideals, and practices

may emerge, which gives it such particular value. Play under supervision, giving opportunities for guidance and enrichment in Christian living is the thing of great value which we see in recreational activities. In other words, the curriculum of religious education must, in touching the life of the individual boy and girl, make a large place for his recreational activities.

The community provides also the facilities for amusement. Only gradually is education learning the value of motion pictures in the achievement of educational ends. In almost every community, however, the public theater is daily providing amusement by means of motion pictures, and most of the pupils in any church school will be found going to these theaters one or more times every week. The educative influence of such amusements is, of course, entirely indirect. People do not go to be *educated,* they go to be *amused.* Yet when we consider what a vast amount of new experience is brought to the life of an individual through such pictures, one begins to realize what they may mean for education. Sometimes the pictures are excellent material for religious education, as for example, *Ben Hur* and *The Sins of the Fathers.* All too often they are of neutral or negative value. Few of us would be willing to have our boys and girls form their estimate of what life is like from what they see depicted on the screen. Yet this is just what they are doing. We cannot prohibit people from going to the theater. We must recognize this experience as part of the raw material with which we work. If we would lift life to a religious level, we must take account of this broadening of experience which is coming to our pupils through motion pictures.

The community life also brings to the child the public library, if the community be so fortunate as to possess one. A very good estimate of children's interests might be formed by consulting the children's department of any public library. A teacher of religion may greatly expand his own understanding of his pupils by learning what they are reading. Moreover such knowledge will open many opportunities for educational activities and interests. The library is the servant of the community. A teacher need not only take account of what children spontaneously read, he may utilize the library in making available for them such reading as will constructively contribute to the achievement of the aims of religious education.

In addition to any classified activities which we might enumerate under the general heading of community factors, there are some which we can only call general life in the group. The pupil has contact with the people of the community. Their ideals become his ideals. He comes in touch again and again with the business of the community. He imbibes the community attitudes on many questions, such as religion, race, prohibition. A curriculum which is to be constructed to meet the needs of life must provide in a large way for these many activities which are constantly going on in the everyday life of the community.

### The Church Mobilizing Its Resources

In performing its work in religious education the church is not simply one among many educative factors in the community. It is the institution which is responsible for lifting the life of that community to a spiritual level. This will largely be done through edu-

cational processes. The various educative factors which we have discussed here may be thought of as the educational resources of the church. Let the church in its work of religious education reach out and utilize the home, the public school, and the other community factors. Let it visualize the life of each of its pupils as a whole, and lift these normal activities of life to the level of religious meaning and value. The church school must be a great mobilizing agency which will draw unto itself all the contributions which the community has to make toward the development of Christian personality in the people of that community.

## PROBLEMS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Ex-President Coolidge and President Hoover, through public utterances, have shown that they hold religion in high regard. How might this known attitude be used educationally? Show how the laws of suggestion would operate in this case.

2. In what ways do your pupils have opportunities to meet the pastor informally and learn to know him intimately? Suggest a project through which the pastor might be utilized in your program of religious education.

3. What value for religious education has the installation of church school teachers and officers in a public service of the church?

4. Outside of any direct religious teaching which the public school may do, show how the attitude of the teacher toward religion is in itself a great educative factor.

5. Just at present the cigarette companies are tying up their advertising with famous people who are represented as using their brands. What educational principles are they utilizing in this?

6. Find out from your public library or school library what the books are which your pupils are reading. How does their reading interest compare with what they are doing in the church school?

7. Make a list of the various organizations in your church which deal with the same children with whom you are working. What is the curriculum of each? To what extent do they overlap? How might better integration be brought about?

8. Take special note of the billboards in your community. What positive and negative values would you think they have for religious education?

9. It has been said that a church in its *total program* is an educational institution. In what sense is this true?

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

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## CHAPTER VIII

## CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

In the preceding chapters we have considered the underlying principles of a curriculum based on experience. Let us now return for a moment to the story of Mr. Mason with which the first chapter opened. Suppose he has followed us through these discussions intelligently and sympathetically. He finds himself in hearty accord with the viewpoint presented. He knows that these are the ideals which he wants to carry into effect. He pauses at this point, however, with a question, "Just how shall I carry this into effect? What shall I have my boys do?"

The answer to Mr. Mason's question lies in the relation between activity and learning. Experience grows out of activity which has meaning for the learner. To direct the trend of experience or learning, then, he will need but to plan for the right kind of *activity* for his boys.

This use of the word "activity" implies more than being physically active. It is used in the sense of *self*-activity on the part of the pupil. There are times when he is physically quiet but mentally most alert, and emotionally active. The outward conduct required to carry into effect a decision once made may be as nothing compared with the mental activity involved in facing and solving the problem, and bringing about the will to carry it into effect. The physical activity involved in walking to a picture and sitting down before it is very slight compared to the mental-emotional responses evoked by the picture, both in point of conscious experience and in effect on future activity.

What are the activities which may be used by the teacher of religion? That, specifically, is the question which every teacher will need to have answered. No simple answer can be made, because in the final analysis the selection of activities must be made in the light of the objectives. Just as the steps which a person must take to get to a certain place are determined by the location of that place, so are the activities of the pupil determined by the point in character achievement which it is desired to approach.

### Activities Grow Out of Objectives

The important place of objectives in selecting pupil activities makes clear why in the chapter on objectives we insisted that before they can be educationally useful, objectives must be made very specific. When a basketball team goes upon the court to play they have a general objective of winning the victory. This general objective does not, however, tell them what specific moves to make. They must have the specific objective of dropping the ball through the basket oftener than their opponents. Their movements are determined by this specific objective of getting the ball into the basket. A general objective like the development of Christian character is of no particular value in selecting educational activities except in so far as it gives some idea of the specific objectives to be chosen. When under this general objective it is stated that it is desired to develop the ability to lead in public prayer, the teacher is in a position to select the activities which may help bring this about.

An illustration of how activities grow out of specific objectives will be of help at this point. Let us suppose that Mr. Mason has set for his class the following ob

jective: "The ability to enter intelligently and sympathetically into the every-member canvass of the church." How is this objective to be attained? There are a number of things which he may have the pupils do and which he will share with them. (1) He may stimulate *discussion* on this question of giving to the church in order to sharpen the issue. Perhaps the boys have not thought very much about the matter of annual pledges to the work of the church. They know that their parents have been making such pledges, and have assumed in general that it is the sort of thing adults like to do. They will perhaps be surprised if the teacher suddenly raises the question of why such pledges are necessary. (2) Having once gotten the issue before the group the boys may be encouraged to make some *observations* which will shed light on the question before them. What do people generally do about church support? How many people are pledging to the support of this church? What amounts do they pledge? What does the church do with the money? (3) Some things will not be evident by mere observation and will require specific *investigation.* For example, a study may need to be made to determine what is the amount of the church budget, and the relation of receipts to expenditures. By means of discussion with the pastor and officers of the church some data may be gathered on the work which the church is actually doing, and what some of the things are which the church ought to do but is not now doing. (4) If the enterprise has been properly guided the investigation will lead into *reading* of books and other literature which have bearing on the work of the church and on Christian giving. It may lead the boys into a study of the value of churches and even of the value of Christianity to civili-

zation. Inevitably the question will be raised as to what right the church has to expect contributions from its members, and this will lead into the problem of Christian giving. An investigation will need to be made of the things the Bible has to say about giving. Pamphlets and books should be available in which may be found discussion of the principles on which Christian giving should take place. What basis, for example, is there for the tithing rule? Why does the United States government allow 15% exemption for donations on income tax reports? (5) All of this should have some very definite relation to the actual *activity of giving.* The boys may help in the making of the every-member canvass in order to have the experience of talking with other people about giving. They should also have the experience of making their own pledges to the church on some basis agreed upon, and having the feeling of their being a part in this undertaking.

The following diagram will show the relation of general objectives to specific objectives, and the relation of activities to objectives. The first case is that just described, the second is that of the Beginners and the church, described on page 150, and the third is that of the class to which an Italian boy was coming as a new member, described on pages 88-89.

| General Objective | Specific Objective | Activities |
|---|---|---|
| Right attitude to church | Intelligent participation in Every-Member Canvass | Discussion, observation, investigation, reading, giving |
| Love of church | To see the church as a place in which to worship | Going to church to meet pastor in worship service |
| World friendship | Cordial reception of Italian boy | Discussion, investigation, special welcome service |

## Kinds of Activities

In any discussion of the activities in which a class may engage, it will be necessary first to state the specific objectives toward which they are to move. In the light of these objectives it will be possible to outline activities, as indicated above. It will here be our purpose simply to list some of the various types of activities through which religious education may be achieved. This will indicate the wide variety of resources which are at the disposal of the teacher in determining the ways and means of achieving his objectives.

It has been customary to classify the activities of the church school into four major divisions—worship, study or instruction, service, and recreation. It is a mistake to think of the curriculum as limited simply to the work done during the period which has ordinarily been set aside for class work. All of these are a part of the curriculum of religious education. This emphasizes the necessity for close co-operation between department leaders, teachers, and leaders of special activities.

It is, after all, quite arbitrary to divide our activities on the basis here suggested. While we have in most church schools a formal worship period, this does not mean that there is no worship at any other time. The most genuine worship may arise in the midst of a careful study of some problem, or in the performance of some service activity. Again, the period set aside for worship is not entirely free from study activities, and certainly it should have a tremendous influence on both the service and recreational life. In the study period attention may be given to some of the problems which arise both in service and recreational life, and also to the problems arising out of worship. In other words,

there is an inter-relation of these various phases of the program, though each may have a specific ultimate purpose in view.

In the above discussion of the four phases of the curriculum as conceived in most church schools, we have but indicated that each of these phases has a contribution to make toward the objectives of religious education. Under each of these divisions of the program there are various types of activities which may be called into use in achieving the objectives. A very brief description of some of these follows. They are of course not mutually exclusive, and often two or more fuse into one.

1. *Performance of function.*—The best education for any activity is actually engaging in that activity, under guidance. There are many opportunities for this type of direct education in the church school. In preparing young people for life in the church, one of our objectives must be to give them the ability and disposition to participate in public worship. The church school provides the actual activity of engaging in public worship. This is one of the best examples of learning to do by doing which we have. The various duties which pupils may perform in the conducting of the church school, such as assisting in programs, serving as officers, the sharing of equipment, the care for supplies, provide opportunities for training in duties which will fall to the lot of any active church official. The life of the school, requiring as it does co-operation among pupils, discipline, working with teachers, making and observing certain rules and regulations, give direct experience in living in a Christian society.

The staff of the Lincoln School of Teachers College in New York has rendered us a real service in describing a number of ways in which educative values have come out of the life of the school. Let us refer to just one instance as an illustration.[1] The school organized what was called an Elementary Council consisting of representatives from the various classes together with an adult adviser. One year it happened that the order in the school lunchroom became very unsatisfactory, and the manager of the lunchroom, the teachers, the principal, the parents, and the children all began about the same time to manifest dissatisfaction with the disorder. The Council was called in to help with this problem. An assembly of the grades was called by the Council, and the whole problem carefully discussed. Many suggestions were received and were passed on to the classes each of which wrote out summaries of the suggestions. Out of this activity grew many helpful classroom discussions which clearly had much value in raising issues involved in proper conduct, and in helping the pupils to formulate their own decisions in such problems. It also provided an opportunity for learning the technique of work in a democratic organization that is utilizing officers and committees, but at the same time bringing into the enterprise the suggestions of the entire group. Needless to say the lunchroom problem was satisfactorily solved.

There is no doubt that the church school has far too long overlooked the opportunities for fruitful educational activities which are all about it in the life of the school itself. Great handicaps, of course, result from the fact that the school meets for but such a brief

[1] *Curriculum Making in an Elementary School.* Ginn and Co., 1927, p. 12ff.

time each week. This is made the more difficult because that brief period is usually divided up into two parts with a different leader in charge of the pupils during each of these sessions. To carry through worth-while activities usually involves more time than is available under this plan. Clearly, however, the educative value per hour spent in the wholesome performance of function, as we have here discussed it, may be much greater than that resulting from a hurried hearing of lessons and telling of stories.

Let us not be misled into the fallacy, however, of thinking that the entire work of the school can be conducted on the basis of carrying out projects in actual living. Much of life must necessarily go on outside of the school. Many of the normal life activities when brought into the schoolroom become artificial. There are many other types of activity through which the church school may influence life and bring about Christian responses.

2. *Observation.*—A great many things are learned simply by seeing what others are doing. It would be difficult to recount the many things which we have learned by such random observation. The likelihood of learning by observation is heightened if such observation is specifically directed to certain ends, such as when medical students are brought into the operating room to observe the work of the expert surgeon.

Consciously or unconsciously pupils are learning many things from observation. They are not always learning wholesome things. They are observing what men and women are doing as they meet life situations. They are learning what the world is like through their life in the world. Is this contact with the world going to

give them a Christian interpretation? Only if the Christian school sets out to direct observation into such channels and to interpret life in a Christian way.

An interesting program designed to lead children to observe good and noble deeds has been developed by Superintendent M. A. Cassidy of the Lexington, Kentucky, public schools. It is called the Golden Deeds system of character education and is incorporated as a part of the course of study. In their reading, study of history and literature, in current events, and in their contact with life the children are encouraged to note the good deeds and noble impulses which they discover. At the appropriate period in the school day, these deeds are reported and discussed, and if deemed worthy, they are recorded in the Book of Golden Deeds kept by each grade. Thus are the children continually on the lookout for deeds which illustrate high ideals and noble living. Their attention is directed to and fixed on the right instead of the wrong. Superintendent Cassidy states that he has observed "a marked improvement, year by year, in the tone and conduct of our youth. A higher sense of honor influences their actions; they are more courteous in every relation of life; a kindlier spirit prevails; cruelty to animals and birds is regarded as barbarous; and many of the cardinal virtues have become their permanent possession because of the high ideals that are constantly before them."[2]

In the church school the activity of observation may well be utilized. Suppose, for example, a teacher feels that his pupils should be given a better understanding of baptism. Why not first let them observe a baptism in the church? Suppose the problem of proper attitude

[2]Cassidy, M. A., *Golden Deeds in Character Education.* Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1924, p. 22.

during prayer is at issue. Why not ask the pupils to observe the attitudes of the pastor and such members of the congregation as are known to be the outstanding Christians of the community?

3. *Excursions.*—This activity is but an attempt to give pupils a better opportunity for observing specific things. Various types of excursions may be planned either for the class as a group under the direction of the teacher, or to be made by individuals through the week. They may be excursions to the open country to observe God's wonder works in nature. They may be excursions to sections of the city in order to observe how other people live. They may be excursions to industrial plants to see how large numbers of people are working for the welfare of all. Normally, of course, excursions will need to come outside of the church school period. It is a convenient way of extending the time available for contact between teacher and class. No teacher who expects to achieve real results should hope to do so without giving some time beyond the period of the church school.

4. *Reading.*—All pupils read. Reading is our great instrument for bringing the world to us. Reading enables us to extend our minds beyond space and time. It affords an opportunity for observing far beyond what is possible by first hand contacts. Moreover, when the observation is done through the eyes of one who is a skilful writer it is even possible to see far more than can be seen by direct observation. Most of us can learn more about a football game we attend from reading the newspaper report about it than we gain from watching the game. The activity of reading is, of course, one which schools have always utilized. It has not, however,

always been a wholesome purposeful activity. Usually the pupil thinks of the assignments made by the school as something which has little relation to his life and which must be gotten through with as rapidly as possible. We have expected pupils to study their church school lessons, but if we may believe the reports of most teachers, very few of them can be induced to do the reading necessary to prepare such lessons.

Yet it is true that our pupils do read. If they are old enough they read the daily papers, they read magazines, they read books of many kinds. If they are very young we may be sure that parents, older brothers or sisters, or loving aunts read to them. All of this suggests that if this reading can be directed into channels which have values toward achieving the aim of religious education it will offer a remarkable opportunity for extending the influence of the church school. For example, a certain church school was making the study of China a project in missionary education. Class periods did not allow the amount of time necessary to make the study as thoroughly as was desired. The plan was adopted of securing certain interesting books and having them passed around as a circulating library. One such book describing the life of a Chinese boy, and giving a very fine picture of child life in China, was by this plan read by almost every pupil in the Junior Department. What would have taken at least two months to accomplish in class was actually accomplished in about the same amount of time entirely outside of the class periods with but such references to the reading as would assist in class discussion.

5. *Memorizing.*—Memory work has always been associated with the church school. Few there are who

would not maintain that pupils should learn many things "by heart." Yet it seems to be a passing achievement. To hear teachers talk in conventions and institutes one would need to draw the conclusion that it is practically impossible in our day to get memory work done. Much of the memory work of the past was unwise, without question. Many things were so poorly learned that they were very quickly forgotten, and even while learned, very little understood. Yet there should be an important place for memory work in the church school. Take, for example, the facilitation of worship by means of memorization of worship materials. How much easier it becomes to engage in a program of worship if the responses, the Scripture passages, and some of the hymns and prayers which are to be used have been memorized by the pupils. With how much greater joy can we enter into such worship services when we can give ourselves fully to the activity without the difficulty of reading the materials, and the annoyance of having to look up things in books before we can participate. Moreover, the service of worship offers an opportunity for direct practice on the part of pupils. It gives them a definite reason for the learning of such worship materials.

There are other reasons, of course, for memorizing. There are, without question, certain sublime truths which state in so much better way than we can in our own words the deepest experiences and convictions of our hearts. The child who often experiences fear, who learns the verse, "What time I am afraid, I will put my trust in Thee," has gained a new control over his fear situations. When in the height of uplift and joy on a holy day we fervently breathe, "This is the day the

Lord hath made!'' our aspiration has been better expressed than our own poor words possibly could do it. This kind of memorization is far different from simply learning things which have no meaning in the present but which may at some future time be applied. They are the outgrowth of experience. There is no virtue in learning abstract truths which have not been revitalized by personal experience. Many are the sins which have been committed in the name of education in forcing children to learn such dogmatic summaries of adult philosophizing without their experiencing in their own hearts the meaning thereof. What use is it for a child to be able to repeat ''God is Love'' if he has never experienced in his heart the great love of the Heavenly Father? Far better that we should engage him in experiences in which he may learn the love of God. Yet for one who has experienced such love, it is helpful to have it put into such beautiful words for him.

6. *Problem solving.*—We discussed in the chapter on method the place of reasoning in the learning process. One of the first duties of the teacher is to promote genuine thinking. The problem method in education is directed toward the utilization of this power for the expansion of knowledge and experience. It must of course be used under proper safeguards. The mere discussion of a problem will not necessarily give more light. It should but open the way for bringing into the problem facts, resources of data, through which a satisfactory solution may be attained.

The use of the discussion method in the church school has all too often been centered on problems which were very abstract and little related to life needs. Sometimes

the problems have been too easy to challenge the mental fibre of the pupil, or so difficult as to make his participation impossible. Yet the problem solving type of activity has exceedingly great possibilities in turning the mind to new truth and new experience. The teacher will do well to keep his eye open for opportunities to challenge his pupils with problems in Christian living.

7. *Questions.*—The use of questions in teaching is so familiar as to require very little discussion. It is a device for securing mental activity on the part of the pupil. A question places the pupil into an imaginative situation to which a response must be made. At many points in the learning process the very best help which the teacher can give is to raise significant questions.

8. *Appreciation.*—We have already indicated that quiet contemplation and appreciation may involve just as wholesome and satisfactory activity on the part of the pupil as when he is physically moving. Beautiful music and art should form an important part of the curriculum. A masterpiece of art conveys a great ideal better than could be done in any number of words. Pictures have the advantage of appealing to the eye. They bring the world to us, just as reading does, but often in a more effective way. Through motion picture travelogues, geographic magazines, and other pictorial presentations, the interesting sights from the ends of the earth are brought into our very home and community. It is difficult to find anything very novel in either our travels or at botanical or zoological gardens, for already most of the interesting and strange sights of the world have been seen in pictures.

9. *Prayer and Hymns.*—The school of religion should conduct its work under an atmosphere of worship and

prayer. Pupils need to be led into the activity of prayer, as spoken by themselves, as participation in prayer spoken by a leader, and as expressed in hymns. Prayer will often most naturally come in the midst of an enterprise or a discussion. The teacher's attitude toward life will mean much. "The practice of the presence of God" as a constant companion in life's activities and needs should receive its first impetus from such practice in the church school.

10. *Recreational activities.*—The recreational program has been added to the activities of many church schools because of its educational values. It offers an opportunity for pupils to share in common activities. It offers teachers an opportunity to observe the pupils when they are taken from under the restraint of the classroom. The recreational program furnishes a laboratory in which the things which have been learned in the school are carried into effect and out of which grow problems and interests from which new learning activities may grow.

11. *Sharing.*—Service activities for others would of course come under the classification which we have called the performance of function. At the same time we may well, under a separate heading, think of the activity of sharing. The life of the school should furnish many opportunities for pupils to share with each other. They may share materials. They may share their abilities, such as when one is able to do a certain thing better than another, who in turn may surpass the first in some other activity. The time has passed when communication between pupils in a school should be forbidden. If school activities are truly wholehearted and purposeful, then pupils must communicate with each other

as they engage in a common purpose, even as a group of men must do when they work on a common project.

12. *Listening to reports of others.*—Individual observation and investigation implies that reports will be made to the group. Oral reports offer an opportunity for persons to share their experience with each other just as an author through his writing shares his experience with those who read his writings. The teacher's experience, which may serve as subject-matter in many situations, must be conveyed by means of oral report to the group. Story-telling forms an important part of present-day education, particularly with younger pupils.

13. *Reproducing experience.*—This is the counterpart of listening to oral reports. In the paragraph above we thought of the group listening to the reports of others. In the reproducing of experience, we think of the individual or the group which is communicating its experience to others. Learning may be made more effective by means of retelling experience, and reproducing it by means of dramatization and drawing. The subject-matter which is used in relation to certain situations may be made much more vivid and effective by encouraging the pupils to reproduce it in some such activities.

## Units of Work

The word "lesson" has from time immemorial been associated with school work. To most of us a lesson is a task which a teacher imposes and which for the satisfaction of the teacher must be done by the pupils. In another sense, however, a lesson represents a unit of work. The total task which is to be undertaken in a course is broken up into separate units, and these we have called lessons.

In the newer approach there is a tendency to discourage the arbitrary limitation of each task to a single day, and to encourage the organization of the work by topics or enterprises which may take from a few minutes to days and weeks. The term which has been applied to this new type of lesson is "unit of work." A unit of work is distinguished from the older term lesson in that it represents a normal division which is not arbitrarily cut into convenient segments for consideration in one period, and that it is recognized by the pupil as something worth while doing, in which he wholeheartedly participates.

Two incidents will serve to illustrate this use of units of work. A class of third year Primary boys and girls during the middle of February when the valentine craze was uppermost suggested that they would like to spend part of their Sunday school time making valentines. Wishing to use this normal interest, the teacher felt around for some possibility to direct it into worth-while channels, and suggested that in a near-by orphanage there were some children who probably would not receive a valentine from anyone. The pupils immediately seized upon the idea of making valentines for these children. Through discussion it was decided that the next lesson period should be spent in the preparation of valentines. In the meantime an investigation needed to be made as to the children who would likely not receive valentines. A list of names was secured from the orphanage. Each child was assigned a certain number of names of children for whom he was to make the valentines, address the envelopes, and send them with his own good wishes. This unit of work consumed one week in point of time and one full lesson period. To

enrich this experience the teacher utilized part of the time in the lesson period while the pupils were making valentines to discuss with them the broader aspects of Christian service and to tell them the story of "Margaret of New Orleans."

Dorothy Dickinson Barbour[3] tells of a class of girls in the eighth grade who met together for the first time with a new teacher. The teacher said to them they might study anything they liked. In great surprise the girls asked, "We don't have to read the Bible?" The teacher replied, "No." After much discussion they finally decided to study the question of life work, because all of them were more or less concerned with what they would do the next year. They discussed many types of vocations and among the questions raised concerning each was this, "Does it help to make the world a better place to live in?" Much puzzled by the problem, one of the girls asked, "Don't people use the Bible to help answer such questions?" The teacher replied that she thought they did. A Bible was produced, but the girls found themselves utterly at a loss as to how to use the Bible for the purpose intended. This led into a study of the Bible and how to use it. At their own request the class spent half of its time in discovering the purpose and content of the different books and where to look for any particular sort of help. This unit of work occupied a large part of the year.

How shall units of work be selected and initiated? There are two ways in which this will be done. The first of these is to seize upon the normal interests and activities of the pupils. In both of the above cases the units of work arose in this way. The second way is

[3] *Making the Bible Desired.* Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1928, pp. 26-27.

by means of what has been called by the teachers of the Lincoln Elementary School[4] "setting the stage." A teacher may deliberately plan to bring the pupils into experiences which will lead into fruitful units of work. In the book by the staff of the Lincoln Elementary School just referred to, a unit of work on China is described. This was initiated through reading with the class a book of stories of child life in China, *The Rabbit Lantern,* and a book of Chinese legends, *Shen of the Sea.* A teacher desiring to introduce a unit of work on the meaning of the cross might stimulate discussion leading into this project by bringing a cross into the assembly room or classroom where all would see it. If the cross is used in his particular church, the same might be accomplished by an excursion into the church during which, if the pupils did not of their own accord ask questions about the cross, the leader would casually call their attention to it. An excursion to the slums or foreign section of a city might very naturally raise questions leading into a unit of work on the reasons for the existence of conditions of poverty, and a Christian's responsibility toward those in need.

### Criteria for the Selection of Activities

Pupils are constantly active. By suggestion and stimulation they may be led into a great variety of activities. Some activities are much more important for educational purposes than others. Any activity must be weighed in relation to the objective for the realization of which it is adopted. In the illustration used above, it would have been quite as easy to interest the pupils in sending valentines to their friends who were

[4] *Curriculum Making in an Elementary School.* Ginn & Co., 1927, p. 46 ff.

already receiving a superabundance of them, as to have them engage in the project of sending them to an orphanage. All of this implies that the teacher is constantly face to face with the problem of selecting the most fruitful activities. To center education in life is not by any means the same as allowing pupils to follow their own spontaneous inclinations. For a teacher to exert his influence in guiding pupils into worth-while activities does not imply that he is to superimpose upon them things in which they are not interested. If he abdicates this part of his leadership, he no longer deserves the honored title of teacher.

Activities should meet the requirements of certain tests before they are adopted in the program of religious education. A few of these tests will be set down here so that teachers may use them in evaluating their own school activities. We are making the assumption that in all cases the activities are adopted with reference to certain specific objectives.

1. *The activity should be one which is not adequately provided for out of school.* It would be folly to let pupils use their Sunday school hour for making valentines simply for the sake of having them make valentines. Both at home and in the public school during that season of the year they have already spent a large amount of time doing this very thing. A teacher of high school girls for a whole quarter had them do nothing but read in class Oxenham's *The Hidden Years.* With very little encouragement and stimulation the girls would have read the entire book at home in one week and perhaps gotten a good deal more enjoyment out of doing it.

2. *The activity should be selected because of its relation to real life situations.* This point of view has been

developed throughout the pages of this book. It is the purpose of the church school to bring religious interpretation into life. It cannot afford to spend its time in activities which have no direct bearing on life values. For too long have we spent our time studying about the wars of the kings of Israel when it would have been very much better for the Christianization of our own social order if we had spent some time on the question of outlawing war in our own day and generation.

3. *The activity should be considered worth while by the pupil.* This may be because he finds in it an opportunity to satisfy his interests and needs, or because it leads him to the achievement of some other desired objective. The whole doctrine of purposeful activity is pertinent here. This criterion alone would of course not be sufficient. It must be taken in conjunction with each of the other criteria here stated. Many teachers have fallen in the fallacy of assuming that anything which the pupils like to do is a good thing to do in the church school. Witness the many and varied types of "hand work" which have been going on in the name of religious education, which in so far as tangible results are concerned, have no relation to results in Christian character. It may be of course that the pupil finds the activity satisfying for a different reason than that in the mind of the teacher. Nevertheless, through the activity, the objective which the teacher has in mind may be achieved. If we may revert again to the valentine incident—it is probably true that the pupils were more interested in the activity of making valentines than they were in sharing with the orphan children. On the other hand, this interest did make it possible for the teacher to approach the development of the attitude of sharing.

4. *The activity should be selected because of the significance of the life situations to which it is related.* Merely to be related to a life situation is not enough. Situations are of varying degrees of significance. We must ask further, is the situation typical? Is it crucial? Is it difficult for the pupil? Does it present several possible responses of varying values of which the pupil must choose one? Unless the situation is typical for the group, the labor involved in helping them to right responses is lost. A member of a group in Florida may have had the situation of feeding the birds in a snow storm while he was on a visit to Chicago, but that is not a typical situation for his group. Unless the situation is crucial there may be some other time when it had much better be treated. The situation presented to a girl in trying to decide where to spend her vacation holds far less educational import than the situation involved in choosing a life companion. Unless the situation is one with which the pupil has difficulty he needs no education to guide him in that situation. For example, because a boy has accidentally injured a younger child while he was roller skating does not require discussion to prove that older boys should not hurt younger children. On the other hand, the question of responsibility of older children for constructively helping younger children to a wholesome play life, may be one in which considerable guidance is needed. Finally, unless the situation presents several possible lines of response no amount of education can be of help to the pupil. The problem of whether he shall take a position for pay or go to high school does not present an alternative for a boy who has the sole support of his family upon his shoulders, but may present a very considerable

problem to one who can manage to go to high school by carefully conserving his time and resources.

5. *The activity must be within the capacity of the individual and the group.* In other words, there must be gradation of activities. It is just as bad to have pupils spend their time on activities which are too easy to challenge them as to have them struggle with things which are still beyond their capacities. It is very easy, particularly in the worship and instructional program of the school, to err on this consideration.

6. *The activity should be rich in "leading on" value.* It should, in the course of its development, open up many fruitful lines of further study and investigation. It should offer opportunities for each individual to express his own interests and capacities. It should be one which leads to the use of a large amount of subject-matter, thus naturally broadening the pupil's horizon. It should, moreover, lead on into the regular activities of life so that religious teaching may be continuous with life rather than being given apart from life, under the great difficulties attendant on carrying over into life.

7. *The activity should have social values.* It should, on the one hand, engage a group in a common enterprise in which each may do his part. The wise teacher will lead out the individual members of the group and help each to share satisfyingly in the whole undertaking. It should, on the other hand, also have social values in the sense of giving the pupil an insight into the problems of social living which Christianity must solve, and experience in facing such problems. While we would by no means minimize the emphasis upon personal religion which has been present in the church school, we would, on the other hand, insist that too little attention

has been given to the social application of the Christian message. Pupils are never too young to begin to face the social implications of the gospel and to do their part in whatever circle they may be moving, to find a Christian outcome for the social problems.

8. *The activity should have its face set to the future.* Religious education has been too much concerned with the past. The acquisition of the heritage of the past has often been its sole purpose, with the consequence that the contribution of the past was not seen in proper relation to the present. More recently religious education has given itself great concern with the present. We seek to find present life needs and interests. We are convinced that we must help the pupil to live more effectively today. Yet the todays will very quickly become yesterdays, and the pupil moves on through a constant succession of days into the future. A religious education which will suitably adjust him only to the life of today will be found inadequate for his life in the tomorrow. For this reason the activities in which we engage our pupils in the school must look to the future. They must give the pupil experience in interpreting his situations religiously and in finding his own way to a Christian outcome. Only thus may we give him the ability to meet in a similar way the new situations as they arise.

9. *The activity should have religious value.* When does education become religious? This is one of the most difficult problems for religious education to solve. As the public school is moving more and more into character education, the question is more insistently asked every day, What does the church school have to offer which the public school cannot give? In our chap-

ter on objectives we stated the position very clearly that education does not become religious until it takes account of the relation of the individual to God, and interprets his situations in the light of the implications involved in this relationship. Religious education may deal with similar activities as those in the public school. It may be concerned with similar situations. But in its interpretation of those situations, religious education offers the pupil a vision of life in a divine society, and the control of his situations through the dynamic arising from responsibility to a divine Being. Unless religious education can keep central in its task this emphasis upon religion in life, it has lost the very opportunity which it was created to meet.

The activity must not only have religious value, it must give the pupil a conception of God and religious conduct which is in accordance with the teachings of Jesus. It is to be feared that much of our teaching in the church school has failed to measure up to this Christian standard.[5]

There is, of course, danger that in his effort to make the teaching religious, the teacher will slip into a certain pious phraseology which will be more likely to make religion unreal than real. In some classes and departments the pupils have been so taught that no matter what question the leader may ask, the unthinking answer which will come in a chorus will always be "Jesus" or "God." Needless to say, religion can only be made a quality in all of life by a vital experience of religious values, and not by simply learning a few pious phrases which may be used on certain occasions.

[5]See, for example, the findings of Forest L. Knapp concerning the effect of certain Old Testament war stories on attitudes of peace and world friendship in articles in the *International Journal of Religious Education*, January and July, 1928.

## Outcomes

The church school has the child under its guidance for but a small fraction of his time. The activities into which it leads him are but a small part of the total activities of his life. Its ministry of interpretation, guidance, and control for religious living touches but a small portion of the total life situations through which any pupil expresses his character. If the church school is to give a religious education which will vitally affect all of life, it must look carefully to the achievement of certain outcomes which will influence those vast areas of living with which no direct school contact can be had. The activities in which the church school engages the pupil must, in other words, leave behind as a possession of the individual such skills, knowledge, attitudes, and ideals as will be employed, with the maximum degree of certainty, in the important activities of life. While our constant aim must be to unite learning and life, after our very best has been done toward this, there is still the need of carry-over of what has been learned in one situation into new situations which will constantly be met.

If religious education is measuring up to the criteria which we have suggested, each pupil should have the experience of meeting in a Christian way a large variety of typical situations. He should have a sufficiently broad experience to see the meaning of Christian living in all his relations and functions. He should generalize his experience in individual situations in such a way as to establish the ideal of living his entire life on a Christian plane.

Experience in Christian living should result in increasing ability to deal with new situations as they

arise. It should, in other words, yield a *technique* of meeting new situations. This will include the habit of suspending judgment before making a response until available facts are considered; skill in analyzing situations; ability to recognize the various factors in them and to weigh their significance; knowledge of and practice in consulting the sources of information and guidance in meeting situations, such as consultation with Christian men and women, the Bible and other literature; and, finally, the dynamic to *act* when once the right course of action has been indicated. It is not possible to equip a pupil with all the knowledge which he will ever need in life, but it is possible to teach him the method whereby he can find his way to a Christian outcome in situations as they arise.

Not only should the pupil in the church school have learned how to conduct his own life on a Christian plan, but he should also have learned the joy of sharing with others and of helping others in their struggle for the Christian life. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ" applies not only to situations in which physical want is the pertinent factor but also in situations where it may be possible to guide minds and souls which are poverty stricken, to the riches of Christian living. The highest type of Christian living is that which shares creatively in helping others to achieve the Christian life.

## PROBLEMS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. A few years ago I was asked to take charge of a combined Junior and Intermediate Department and help develop an educational program. On my first visit I noted a very bad state of confusion and disorder throughout the assembly period. I knew that here must be my first point of attack. What activities would you suggest as appropriate to bring about the desired change?

2. A Beginners Department principal has requested the children to bring five cents each on the Sunday before Easter so that they may purchase an Easter lily to place in the church, and afterward take it to a helpless crippled boy. How does this activity fit the criteria we have set up? What additional activities would you suggest to make the enterprise have the richest value?

3. Some church schools have great difficulties in getting pupils to take proper care of hymn books and other property. Suggest some activities by which this situation might be changed.

4. Make a study of some printed course and list the objective offered for one or more lessons and the activities suggested for the attainment of the objective. Evaluate the activities by the criteria here given.

5. How would you evaluate by the criteria given in this chapter, the following dramatization carried out in a boys' and girls' camp, based on Judges, chapters 4 and 5:

The entire Canaanite valley is peaceful and quiet. So the lookout for Sisera's city, Harosheth, finds it when she makes her earliest morning observations. Promptly the large gate of the city opens and out come women and children, who go down to the river Kishon, some to wash, others to do their laundry, others to grind meal, and others to offer to Baal. But before long there are to be seen a few mysterious stirrings and signals on the distant hillside and far in the distance a trumpet is heard. The lookout sees and hears all and sends word to Sisera. Out marches his entire army, virtually to frighten away by its splendor, magnificence, size, and superior bearing, any undesirable foreign intruders. The army parades once down the Canaanite valley, comes back to the city, and goes down the valley again. Then suddenly, entirely without warning, a horde of unkempt and entirely unorganized Israelites, armed only with clubs and rocks break from the underbrush and from the near-by hillside and rush wildly at Sisera's army. The result is obvious—the Canaanites are dumbfounded! Panic seizes them! Their lines are broken! The horses stampede! As a Canaanite falls an Israelite seizes his sword and shield and soon the majority of the Israelites are armed. Sisera flees across the River Kishon! The waters of this stream too have suddenly risen by the breaking of an upstream dam as if to help the Israelites in their fight. Sisera's army is completely routed and a glorious victory is won by the Israelites on that day. And in the distance is seen Sisera before the tent of Jael and then his demise at the hand of a woman, all for the Israelite cause of freedom. ("Deborah Inspires Again," *Light Bearer*, November, 1928.)

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

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## CHAPTER IX

## SELECTING AND USING LESSON MATERIALS

In this chapter we shall give consideration to the teacher's use of prepared lesson courses. Can he use prepared materials and still carry out the principles already discussed? How shall he select his materials? What may he expect the prepared course to do for him? How shall he use the course to make it most effective? What are some of the available materials? These are some of the questions which a teacher has a right to have answered before this discussion is closed.

### Lesson Materials and the Curriculum

In the minds of many people, there is no difference between lesson materials and the curriculum. It has been customary, for example, to speak of the "uniform lesson curriculum" or the "graded lesson curriculum." In the preceding chapters, we have tried to show that a curriculum is something much more vital than the printed pages of a book. It is nothing short of the actual experience which pupils are undergoing. Lesson materials do, however, have a very close relation to the curriculum. They serve to guide pupil and teacher into those activities which are fruitful for educational results. They serve to point out significant elements in experience and to show their bearing on the carrying out of life purposes. They contain, in part, the source-materials which are needed in carrying educational activities to the most fruitful outcome.

Every worker in the church school is to a greater or less degree dependent on printed courses in shaping his curriculum. Some have tried to prepare their own materials in an entirely free manner, meeting the needs of pupils as they arose, but rarely has this been successful. There is need for greater resources than a local teacher has at his command. There is need for more systematic and comprehensive planning of curricula than a local leader is ordinarily able to provide. The more competent teachers will use prepared courses with a great measure of freedom. Others will need to lean on them more heavily for guidance in what to do. A prepared course of study is an attempt on the part of a writer to visualize how learning enterprises may develop to the best advantage. If it serves the teacher in thus developing his work it has been successful. If it stands in the way of spontaneous life activities it has not only not served its purpose, it has defeated the very end for which it was created.

## Types of Materials

As we view the vast array of lesson materials which in the course of years have been prepared, we may divide them into several general types on the basis of the way in which they regard the relation between subject-matter and life experience. It is, of course, not possible to draw sharp lines of distinction in the case of every piece of material. Sometimes a single course at different points will conform to each of these types.

1. The first of these types we shall call the *material* centered. The purpose of these courses is to teach materials which are considered to be a useful possession of growing persons. There was a time when practically

all of education consisted in the teaching and learning of worth-while materials. In our more recent educational developments we seek to utilize life situations and needs as points of departure. We must grant, of course, that in a certain sense no course is purely material centered. In all cases those who prepared the course had in mind not simply that the material might be learned but that it might be learned because of certain value which it possesses for life.

2. The second type we shall call the *material-situation* centered. The point of departure is made from some useful body of subject-matter to be learned, but in addition the further attempt is made to relate this subject-matter to life. When the teacher is asked to raise certain questions which are intended to show the bearing of the material learned on the life of the pupil, then we have passed into this general type of lesson courses. It is this approach which insists that "impression should lead to expression." It is the teacher who is working from this point of view who will frequently ask, "Now what truth does this hold for us?" The weakness of this approach is that it seeks to fit life situations to materials, rather than shaping materials to meet life needs. Moreover, the teacher usually finds his lesson period to have been consumed by the teaching of the material, with no time remaining for thoroughgoing application to life.

3. The third type we shall call *situation-material* centered. The teacher's attention is called first of all to the needs of his pupils. Perchance he is given some directions for the discovery of those needs. Ways are suggested whereby he may raise problems in the minds of his pupils. It is then as a means of meeting these

life needs and solving these problems that source-material is presented. Lesson courses built on this plan attempt to provide the teacher with some of the material necessary for the meeting of such life needs and to guide him to other sources. This constitutes at once a weakness and a strength. Its weakness is that when the actual needs of the pupils in a class are discovered they may not be of such a nature as to be particularly well met by the source-material suggested. Its strength is that it does give the teacher certain positive values with which to work.

4. The fourth type we shall call the purely *situation* centered. Little more than teachers' guides can be prepared for use with this plan, for the approach itself denies that any materials can be prepared beforehand. Those who advocate this approach to the educational process insist that the situations of pupils shall be made primary, and that the teacher shall make no plans until it is clear in what direction these pupil needs will lead. This approach is, of course, always life-centered. It is not likely, however, to lead to very positive outcomes in experience, except under the guidance of a very able leader. We may scarcely assume that pupils themselves will have very carefully thought out the needs and problems to which they will expect answers in the church school. The ideal represented in this approach is wholesome. Its practical application is fraught with difficulty.

In considering these various approaches to the preparation of lesson materials, the discussion of the preceding pages would lead us to designate the third as being the most likely to carry into effect the principles of curriculum-making which we have advanced. It pro-

vides for the utmost freedom on the part of the local leader to discover and utilize the life experience of his pupils. It does not, on the other hand, leave him without adequate guidance in building a constructive curriculum which is likely to lead toward a definite goal. A good curriculum will provide for a way of discovering problems and interests, and for a variety of resource materials which may be used in activities based on such problems and interests.

### Making Materials That Are Life-Centered

The needs of growing life must be uppermost in the selection of courses. Different groups will require different types of materials. In the more recent systems, attention has been given to the problem of covering the religious needs of growing persons as they arise at the various ages. Through careful study and research, a knowledge of such needs has been gained which may be more exact even in the case of a particular group in a local church than that which could be gained by an individual teacher making his own study. Thus the courses recommended by a central curriculum committee, even at long range, deserve at least careful consideration. The problem of so preparing lesson courses that *in the hands of the local teacher* they will become truly life-centered, is one to which much thought and experimentation is being given. Let us examine several ways in which lesson writers have attempted to help teachers in making their courses life-centered.

1. First we may mention the plan of giving the local leader some guidance in finding the needs of his pupils, and presenting materials which may be used in meeting these needs. This requires the local worker to take

a large share in the building of his curriculum. Here is an example of a single lesson built on this plan:

Under the title "Working Happily Together,"[1] the teacher's attention is centered on the very common situation of little children learning to work together. It is suggested to the teacher that through their reaction to the situation occasioned by the making of an autumn border and through visits to the kindergarten, she may get acquainted with this particular problem as it manifests itself in the pupils of her department.

To give guidance in meeting this situation in a Christian way a story is told in which a similar problem occurs, with the suggestion that the teacher may substitute some other story if this is not within the experience of these particular children. Several passages from the Bible are suggested as appropriate in leading pupils to a proper interpretation of the situation under consideration. Such songs as the following are suggested, "The Squirrel," "The Birdie's Song," "The Happy Family," "Be Ye Kind to One Another," and it is recommended that the teacher show some pictures of members of the family engaged in helpful activities. The memory verse with this lesson is "Be ye kind one to another." Throughout this lesson the emphasis is placed on the needs of the pupil. The teacher is given large freedom in the selection of material in order to meet the needs as she may discover them. The teacher's manual gives guidance but also does everything possible to keep the teacher from following the suggestions slavishly.

The *Christian Quest*[2] program materials are built on this plan. In the pamphlet, *How a Leader Proceeds with a Group,* many suggestions are given for discovering the needs of the group, and a rating chart is provided through which a study may be made of individual pupils or of the group as a whole. The leader is given certain help in selecting the kind of material which will be useful in guiding pupils to develop along

[1]Lesson 57, *Beginners Quarterly,* Second Year, The Christian Board of Publication, St. Louis, pp. 52-56.

[2]International Council of Religious Education, 1927.

the line of the needs indicated. The resource pamphlets give the leader a background from which to work, though no pupil materials have yet been issued.

In the course for seventh grade pupils in the syndicate Graded Series, *Religion in Everyday Life,* by Harold Hunting, the material is arranged to meet outstanding life problems, which, however, must be made real through rediscovery in the life of a particular group before the course may be spoken of as truly life-centered. The Epworth League has used this general approach through providing a series of pamphlets on a variety of subjects, under the general title, *Everyday Adventures for Intermediates.* Selection of a particular pamphlet will presumably be made after the needs of Intermediates have been discovered. Weston has succeeded admirably in building the Group Graded Lesson topics into life needs as they may be discovered in a group, in his two books,[3] *Jesus and the Problems of Life,* and *Jesus' Teachings.* In this type we should also name the pamphlets by Stock, entitled *Christian Life Problems,*[4] *Problems of Christian Youth,*[4] *Youth People and Money.*[5]

The characteristic of this approach is that certain great life needs must first be assumed, for only thus is it possible to suggest procedures and present materials. These needs must, however, be re-discovered in each group before the course can truly center in *their* experience. There is a great risk that the local teacher will make such courses purely material centered, because of lack of ability or inclination to do the necessary work to discover needs.

[3]Both by Pilgrim Press.
[4]Pilgrim Press, 1927.
[5]Congregational Education Society, 1928.

2. A second way of helping teachers to make courses life-centered is that of suggesting certain *enterprises* into which pupils may be led and through which they may gain actual experience in Christian living. Whole courses as well as single units of learning have been built upon this plan. In order to make sure that the enterprises suggested will really touch the needs of the local group, there are usually a variety of suggestions made of things to do, so that proper selections may be made. An example of this type is a course entitled *How Big Is Your World?*[6] One of the aims is stated as being "to help young people in their solution of the problems of everyday living that have to do with race friction or class conflict." Among the various suggestions for launching the course appears the following:

> There may have been an experience of race-friction in the school that will make it desirable for this group to face the problem of their own relations with young people of other races or nationalities in the community. In such a case the leader may use that as a starting point, having it suggested by the young people as a vital situation in so far as that is possible. Such an experience of race-friction may thus be recognized as a problem of everyday living, for which the class will seek a Christian solution.

In order to bring about the realization of the aims, four possible enterprises are suggested: (1) Making friendly contacts with another racial group in the local community. (2) Engaging in friendly service for some specific cause in another land. (3) Learning to understand in what varied forms religion expresses itself, and to appreciate what is best in the religions of others. (4)

[6] An experimental unit by John L. Lobingier, issued by the International Council of Religious Education.

Building a "Hall of Fame" without regard to barriers of race or nationality. Under each of these headings are suggested appropriate procedures through which the enterprises may be developed, and a variety of materials which may be used in such development. Throughout this presentation the author is careful to allow abundant place for alternative activities on the part of the leader of the group.

A considerable number of courses of this general type are now available, of which but a few may be mentioned: *Our Church,*[7] by Lobingier; *Young People's Projects,*[7] by Shaver; *Jesus, the Kind and Courageous,*[8] an experimental course; *Project Lessons on the Gospel of Mark,*[9] by Wadhams.

3. A third way of helping teachers to make courses life-centered is through the presentation of reports of actual situations which have been met by others, with the hope that parallel cases will be found in the lives of pupils. Through a discussion of the cases presented, it is expected that guidance will be given the pupils in meeting their own situations. Here are a few examples:

*The boy who wanted a bicycle.*—George's mother promised him a bicycle if he made three A's at the end of the school term.

Just as he entered the school to take his last examination he was told by the principal that so far he had made only two A's. That meant that he had only this one more chance to make the third A. The subject in which he was to take the examination was English.

He had answered seven questions out of the ten fairly well, but not perfectly; and he did not know the answers to the last three. He sat between his girl cousin and boy friend, both of whom were very good in English. As he realized that without

[7]University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois.
[8]Christian Board of Publication, St. Louis, Missouri.
[9]Century Co., New York City.

the third A he would not be able to get his longed-for bicycle, the thought came to him that he might copy from one of the two near him. As he started to look at one of the papers, he suddenly realized it would not be right to get an A by cheating. He did not cheat, and knew that therefore he would not get the promised bicycle.

A few days later his mother called up the principal to find out George's grades. The principal told her that George had made three A's and that the third A was in English.

"No," exclaimed George, "that is a mistake, for I only answered seven questions out of ten." When the principal looked it up he found that George was right; he then told them that he would give him an A anyway because he was honest, but George would not accept it because he did not earn it.

QUESTIONS

1. George could have copied. He could have kept quiet when the principal made the mistake with his mark. Why did he do neither?

2. He could have accepted the A, since the principal offered it to him.

3. What would you have done in each case? Give reasons.[10]

The following case is suggested for discussion in a group of teachers, to help them develop good method in teaching:

A minister with some understanding of psychology was delivering story sermons. He knew that children liked to see things illustrated in the concrete, so he showed them one Sunday morning a frying pan with a pancake in it which was baked on only one side. He used as his text Hosea 7:8: "Ephraim is a cake not turned," and went on to apply this to situations in which boys and girls do not carry through things which they start out to do, or do not live well-rounded lives. Parents later reported that the children were greatly impressed by the service. They told all about the frying pan and the half-cooked pancake. The parents regretted, however, that the children had forgotten the application.

[10]Neuberg, Maurice J., *Right Living*. 1925, pp. 69-70. Reprinted by permission of the University of Chicago Press.

Did what the children remember bear out the minister's theory that children are interested in actual concrete things?

Where was his theory faulty?

Have you reason to believe that children can see analogies? If you show them a lighted candle to illustrate the way in which a life should shine, will they remember the candle or will they form a habit of cheerfulness?

Give some illustrations of Sunday school teaching which have employed this method of analogy.[11]

It is usually made clear in this type of lesson that the situations actually printed are not to form the center of discussion but to serve merely as discussion starters. Needless to say, however, the temptation is exceedingly great to let the class degenerate into a fruitless discussion of the cases presented with no really adequate thought given to the actual problems of the pupils themselves. In addition to those already named, three other courses built on this problem-case plan may here be mentioned: *And Who Is My Neighbor?*;[12] *What Does Christ Expect of Young People Today?*[13] by Sailer; *Problems in Living*,[14] by Cowles.

The above classifications cover the three types of courses which have been built with a view to meeting life situations. Let us not, however, condemn all other courses as being "content centered." The fact that a course covers a certain content does not necessarily make it something separate and apart from life. There are some great life needs which may be apparent to any leader, and which may be met by courses covering the field of those needs. By proper study of pupils, cer-

[11]Watson, Goodwin B. and Watson, Gladys H., *Case Studies for Teachers of Religion.* Association Press, New York, 1926, pp. 37-38.

[12]The Inquiry, New York City.

[13]The Pilgrim Press, Boston.

[14]University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

tain life situations may have been discovered, and for the meeting of such situations a book on a certain subject may be very much life centered for the group. For instance, a class of young people was found to be interested in the question of what it means to be a Christian. To them *What It Means to Be a Christian,*[15] by Bosworth, was not a content-centered course but a course which centered vitally in life needs. A class may be vitally interested in prayer and find such a book as *The Meaning of Prayer,*[16] by Fosdick, or *Adventures in Prayer,*[17] by Thurston, a genuine approach to meeting life needs. A group may be concerned with the problems of choosing a life work and find the best satisfaction of life needs in such books as, *What Shall I Do with My Life?*[18] by Donnelly, *Out Into Life,* by Horton, *Finding My Place,*[19] by Moxcey. Sometimes the sheer enjoyment of studying a book may make truly experience centered what would look to be only a subject-matter centered course. Thus have classes found joy in *Paul, the Dauntless,*[20] by Mathews and *The Garden of Eden,*[21] by Hodges.

This brings us back to a point which was previously made. In the final analysis a curriculum will be centered in life if the teacher makes it so. The problem of making any particular prepared course center in the experience of the pupils must be raised again and again as the course itself proceeds. The writer who prepares the course can only suggest in a general way

[15]The Pilgrim Press, Boston.
[16]Association Press, New York City.
[17]Fleming H. Revell, New York City.
[18]Westminster Press, Philadelphia.
[19]Abingdon Press, New York City.
[20]Fleming H. Revell, New York.
[21]Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

what activities may be appropriate for a given group. If he is wise he will offer alternatives from which the teacher may choose. In many cases the teacher's own plans may be better than any the lesson writer has suggested. The lesson writer does owe it to the local leader, however, to offer some guidance in locating the needs of his group, and showing how the course may center in those needs.

## What to Select

To some it will seem to be an unnecessary question to ask what courses shall be selected. They take it as a matter of course that one of the systems of lessons prepared by their own denomination will be used throughout the school. Some others would consider themselves very much behind the times if they accepted in wholesale fashion any given system of lessons. There is much to be said on both sides of this question.

We have already stated that systems of lessons are now prepared on the basis of careful studies to discover the needs of growing persons at various ages. By means of a complete system of lesson courses it is possible to provide in graduated fashion and in comprehensive manner for a full and balanced range of religious needs. This is not possible where each teacher or grade is permitted to choose as they will.

On the other hand, there is educative value in building what may be called an *eclectic* curriculum through the selection of the course for each particular class which is best suited to the needs of both pupils and teacher. For a group of teachers to face the question of what shall be done in each grade during a particular year

is for them to consider the purposes of their work in a way which is not possible when a complete system is blindly adopted. In schools where the leaders are competent to give consideration to the development of an "indigenous" curriculum, such procedure should be encouraged. There are many other schools, however, where it will be much more desirable to have them follow the suggestions of a denominational board which has given careful thought to the planning of a proper sequence of courses.

When a school works on the basis of selecting an eclectic curriculum, certain safeguards should be provided. Care should be taken that a pupil as he moves through the school receives a broad and balanced education. In other words, it is not possible to select at random in any particular year whatever is to be used in one grade without regard to what has gone before and what is to come after. Moreover, the desire for free electives is more often the desire of a teacher to use particular materials which he likes than an attempt to provide pupils with the things which they need. Unless such free selection grows out of discovered needs and interests of the group, there is little to be gained by it.

There is need for a comprehensive outline of a curriculum of religious education which may become basic to the work of all Protestant denominations. An effort to provide such an outline is now being made through the International Council of Religious Education. Such an outline or "curriculum guide" will take its point of departure from a comprehensive statement of objectives in religious education on which all denominations can agree. This will be followed by a

study of the experience of growing persons on the basis of which may be determined the specific objectives for each age-group, and the type of course units which will best achieve such specific objectives. The advantages growing out of such a plan will be many. It will give each denomination a comprehensive basis for the preparation of its materials. It will enable local churches to build their own curricula on a scientific basis and in a systematic way. It will make it possible, through interdenominational co-operation, to have the most competent writers prepare course units in fields not already covered by existing materials. It will make possible the cataloging and evaluating of all existing materials on the basis of a comprehensive plan.

### The Use of the Courses Selected

In the final analysis, the extent to which courses selected for use in the church school are effective in developing Christian living will depend upon the way they are used by the teacher. A competent teacher with very meager material can build an effective curriculum, while an incompetent teacher with the most carefully prepared materials may make an utter failure of his work. Lesson making bodies are recognizing that their chief concern must be with helping local workers to approach intelligently the realization of certain objectives, rather than giving them a series of rules of procedure which may lead only to deadening routine.

1. In discussing the use which the local leader is to make of prepared materials, we would first of all emphasize the need for freedom. After all, a course is a tool. It is intended to help the leader to accomplish a certain purpose. He should be free to use that tool

in the way it will help him most. There is nothing sacred about any particular course which requires that it must be carried out in a certain way. Let emphasis first be placed upon the enrichment and control of experience so that religious living may result, and the course of lessons will be seen in its proper perspective.

2. Professor Betts has pointed out the need of "stress and neglect" in the use of lesson materials. One who prepares a course must provide for the average group. One who uses the course must on his part develop it so as to best lead to creative Christian living and the development of Christian personality. This will mean that certain parts of the course will need to be expanded, developed, and enriched. It may be that a section intended to take but one class period may develop into two or three or even more. On the other hand, there will be certain sections of the course which for a particular group will seem to have little actual value. Such parts will be neglected. They will be passed over hurriedly. They may even be dropped out entirely.

3. In addition to the source materials provided by a prepared course of study, the teacher must constantly be on the lookout for supplemental materials. A well-prepared course will contain many suggestions for ways in which supplemental material may be found. No course printed months in advance can take account of current happenings. These must be found in newspapers, magazines, and in contact with community life. No prepared course can take full account of the resources of a community in its schools, public library, and other assets to religious education. None could foresee what may be available through motion pictures, lectures, and other presentations in a given community,

that may contribute to the development of a subject under consideration. Every teacher should have available a reference library both for his own use and for the use of his pupils. Some church schools maintain a school library. This has advantages, if the library is open at certain hours during the week. A teacher's available resources should include books of stories, magazines, art treasures, and other aids to the expansion and enrichment of the course which may be in use. It will be well to have several courses selected from different series in addition to the regular text. A file of pictures should be readily available. Surely every teacher should receive regularly one or more good magazines on methods in religious education, such as *The International Journal of Religious Education, The Bethany Church School Guide, The Church School Journal, The Westminster Leader for the Church School.* If he is a worker in a children's department, there should be added either the *Elementary Magazine* or the *Pilgrim Elementary Teacher.* Often the teacher will find very helpful articles in the magazines in the field of general education. These may be consulted in any good library.

4. Finally we would maintain that in the proper use of a course, the teacher must make it over into the activities of his own pupils before it can become a curriculum. This may be most difficult. It requires the teacher to see the lesson materials which he is using in terms of the activities, problems, interests, and situations of his own boys and girls. It requires careful planning weeks in advance. It requires the use of all those methods for learning to know one's pupils which we discussed in a preceding chapter. It requires a fruitful imagination so that the possibilities of a series of lessons for translation into pupil activities may be visualized.

As an example of the way in which a prepared course may be worked over to fit the needs of a given group, we give the following plan worked out by a teacher with the Primary Group Lessons for the spring quarter, 1929:

A careful study was made of the materials presented in the quarterly, and the lessons were then grouped around certain units of work. It chanced that the selection of lesson topics had been made so as to make possible a consecutive use of the lessons as they appear in the book. The teacher would have felt free to rearrange the order so as to fit her scheme of organization around life needs if that had been necessary. The class activities were developed around the following centers of experience:

### A. Praying

The lessons under this general heading are the first three in the quarter, with the following topics: "Eleazer Prays to God for Help," "Praying for a Friend in Trouble," "Thankfulness for Help." The teacher planned to have this unit of learning develop out of the prayer life of home, church, and church school. She used in connection with the lesson stories a number of other stories about prayer such as "The Lost Children" from *The Children's Story Hour,* and "A Boy and His Alphabet" from *Doing Right.* She selected suitable memory prayers for the children for morning, bedtime and mealtime. These were typed on sheets about 4 by 6 inches, and it was planned that the children should participate in helping to find suitable pictures illustrating them. The prayers were assembled and bound into a small booklet for each pupil with the pictures on the opposite side and with a picture of the child Samuel on the cover.

### B. Being Brave

This unit covered the next three lessons of the quarter, including the following topics: "Being Brave Away from Home," "Daniel Bravely Does What Is Right," and "Stories Retold." This unit could be very naturally introduced through a discussion following the question, "Who are some people whom you would call brave?" The meagerness of the children's concept

of bravery had previously been revealed by the fact that the only persons they could name as being brave were George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Charles Lindbergh, and Amelia Earhart. Thus the teacher found a part of her task to be that of broadening the conception of what bravery means, leading the discussion into a consideration of ways in which children need to be brave, and lifting the whole idea of bravery into the realm of a desirable religious quality. In the course of the development of the unit use will be made of observation by having the pupils keep a lookout in their reading and experience for illustrations of deeds of bravery. In addition to the materials provided by the quarterly two stories were listed for use from the teacher's textbook, Course 3, Part II in the syndicate Graded Lessons, namely, "The Roll of Honor" and "How Cedric Became a Knight."

### C. Being Honest and Truthful

This unit occupies the next three Sundays, and involves the following topics: "Being Honest About Money," "Being Honest When No One Knows," and "Jacob Deceives His Father." Additional material to be used in the development of this unit is the story "Ruth's Honor" from the pupil's folder in Course 3, Part II of the syndicate Graded Lessons, and the story which appeared in a current daily of a prominent business man who spent a large part of his fortune to pay debts incurred early in his business career, for which he was not legally liable. Some activities will be utilized, both in observation and actual practice of honesty through conduct assignments. It is recognized, however, that great care needs to be exercised in the development of this unit in order to avoid having children become priggish about their own honest deeds.

### D. Forgiving

This unit occupies the remaining three Sundays, covering the topics: "Esau Forgives Jacob," "Jesus Forgives Peter," and "Jesus Teaches How God Forgives." This unit grows naturally out of the common experiences of children. With them quarrels quickly and easily arise, and as quickly and easily subside. Literature is full of dramatic incidents centering in forgiveness or the failure to forgive. The experience which is possible in

this direction for eight-year-old children is of course very much limited. As further enrichment material the teacher used "Moc's Coals of Fire" from *Rules of the Game* by Lambertson, which is the story of an Indian boy who forgave a white trader who had seriously harmed him, and saved the white man's life. Needless to say, this story has the elements which made it gripping to the group.

As this whole quarter's work draws to a close, the teacher plans to lead the group into an activity which summarizes what they had been doing, and will help to fix as habits in the lives of the children the things which they have learned. Each child will be ensouraged to make a poster under the general title, "Learning to Live as God's Children." Under this title, in smaller letters, the following rules may be written: "(1) Be honest." "(2) Be truthful." "(3) Learn to pray." "(4) Obey God's laws." At the upper left corner on each poster may be placed the picture of a boy or girl. These posters are to be hung in the children's bedrooms. This activity should prove interesting and stimulate discussion on the matter of God's laws for right living.

## Available Courses

A catalog of available materials for religious education is manifestly impossible in the brief space which can here be devoted to this purpose. The time has passed when such a list can be made up by naming a few series. The titles would now run into hundreds.

*The International Improved Uniform Lessons* have had such a long and honorable history as to be almost a household word in every Christian home. They are published by practically every denominational publisher and many independent publishers. The outlines for these lessons were supplied for many decades by the International Sunday School Lesson Committee, which has been merged with the Committee on Education of the International Council of Religious Education to form what is known as the Educational Commission.

A new appreciation of the principle of gradation and the effort to center education in the needs of life have brought these lessons under severe criticism. There is evidence that with each cycle a more careful effort is made to select materials which have maximum value in guiding pupils in religious living, but the difficulties in doing this with a lesson intended for all ages are readily apparent.

*The International Group Graded Lessons* are a more recent output of the International Lesson Committee. In this series the attempt has been made to prepare materials which are graded by departmental groups, and uniform within those groups. The lessons are dated and issued quarterly by the publishers from outlines prepared by the International Lesson Committee (now the Educational Commission). These lessons are predominantly biblical but there is a definite effort to make them pupil-centered. The aim is to nurture the growing moral and religious life of the child, and to lead to a permanent commitment of that life to God through Jesus Christ, and to fitness for service in his Kingdom. While these lessons were first issued in 1925, a large number of denominations have already adopted their use. They have been found particularly helpful in small schools.

*The International Graded Lessons* were first issued about 1910 from outlines prepared by the International Lesson Committee. With various revisions and adaptations these lessons had a very fruitful career. More recently there has been an increasing feeling that they no longer adequately represent the viewpoint of modern religious education. In 1922 the International Lesson Committee decided that it would not make further re-

visions of these outlines and would leave to the various denominations the responsibility of making such revisions as they might see fit. Under this provision a syndicate of three denominations (Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal, South, and Congregational) undertook an extensive revision. As this revision developed it was found that in many respects it was necessary to rewrite the entire series because of the radical changes in educational viewpoint which have taken place. In October, 1928, the first products of this enterprise were published as the *Closely Graded Courses.* Some of the smaller denominations have adopted the use of the syndicate materials. In the meantime another group of denominations including the Disciples, Northern Baptist, Presbyterian, U. S., Presbyterian, U. S. A., and the United Church of Canada have associated themselves together for co-operative work in revising their graded courses. The products of this undertaking are rapidly being completed and appearing on the market. Through these two major enterprises in the graded lesson field, and a number of enterprises conducted by single denominations, church schools are rapidly having made available for them curriculum materials based on the best educational principles.

In addition to the courses which have here been mentioned, a considerable list might be added of those which have been developed independently by individual denominations.

Outside the work of the International Lesson Committee there has been developed a number of series of lessons which have attained considerable prominence. Among these may be mentioned *The Abingdon Religious Education Texts,* published by the Abingdon Press; the

*Completely Graded Series,* published by Charles Scribner's Sons; the *Constructive Studies in Religion,* published by the University of Chicago Press; the *Beacon Courses,* published by the Department of Religious Education of the American Unitarian Association; and the *Christian Nurture Series,* published by the Protestant Episcopal church.

Besides these series of courses, an increasing number of individual courses issued by various publishers are having wide circulation. It would be impossible to give a complete list of these. A goodly number of them have already been referred to in this chapter.

Before closing this section it will be in order to say just a word concerning what has been called the *International Curriculum of Religious Education.* In 1922 the International Lesson Committee appointed a subcommittee on the International Curriculum of Religious Education under the chairmanship of Professor W. C. Bower, now of the University of Chicago. This committee undertook the construction of a curriculum of religious education which should provide in integrated fashion for both Sunday and week-day schools. This enterprise was made necessary for two reasons: *First,* the ongoing movement of thought in educational science demanded that religious education have a curriculum based on the best educational principles. *Second,* the expansion of religious education in the local church to include many activities in addition to the Sunday school made necessary a more comprehensive curriculum. Under the auspices of this committee and under the immediate direction of the Bureau of Research of the International Council of Religious Education extensive plans

were made for the development of this curriculum, and much study, research and experimentation carried out.

With the formation of the Educational Commission of the International Council and with the development of the newer series of lessons by the denominations, the question was again raised as to the function of the Educational Commission in the field of curriculum construction. It is too early to predict what will finally be decided. The Educational Commission is, however, making the curriculum enterprise central in its work. Under its advice and guidance the Bureau of Research is continuing to promote research and experimentation in curriculum. The present thinking of the committee is in the direction of what was called above a "curriculum guide." Not only is the Educational Commission active in this co-operative curriculum enterprise, but the curriculum committees of a large number of the denominations have also been enlisted to carry their share of the work. Never before was there such widespread interest in a co-operative effort to provide curriculum materials for the church schools of America. Whether eventually the denominations co-operating in the International Council will, through this agency, issue curriculum materials jointly or whether they will continue each to issue its own, the future alone can tell. One thing is certain, the curricula of religious education of the Protestant churches of America will, in the next few decades, be tremendously influenced by this co-operative project. It is an enterprise which is drawing into itself a large number of workers from all denominations and out of which will flow an educative influence which will be far-reaching in its effects.

## The Worship Curriculum

The curricula intended for use by class teachers had been crystallized into rigid and formal procedures at the beginning of the present emphasis on a pupil-centered education. The struggle in this field has had to be for greater freedom. Strange as it may seem, in the field of worship, which has occupied so large an amount of the time of our church school, almost no effort had been made to provide a prepared curriculum. Each leader was allowed to do that which was good in his own eyes. Only recently has the new emphasis on worship led to more careful preparation for this period of the church school hour. It may not be said, however, that our services of worship have maintained a vital relationship to life values. Too often they have been of little interest to those participating in them.

The worship element should be the heart of the school of religion. It is through worship that the child may be brought into relationship with the Heavenly Father. It is through worship that life experiences may be lifted to the realm of the religious and seen in terms of eternal values. It is through worship that the quality which we call religious may be added to all experience. Worship therefore is the heart of religious education.

This implies that worship is more than a period in which certain formal singing, Scripture reading, and prayer are carried on. Worship should be a normal outcome of every activity in which pupils engage in the church school. It is this ideal to make worship an all pervading element in religious education which is leading to the breaking down of the rigid lines separating the assembly and class periods. Many of our more progressive schools are finding a richer worship experience

possible by integrating worship with other activities of the church school. To accomplish this, some are placing the entire church school period of a single grade of boys and girls under the guidance of one leader, rather than dividing between a worship leader and class teachers. This is not to say that there is no place for the more formal worship program. It is, however, a recognition of the principle that if the curriculum is to be life-centered, it needs most to be so in the activities of worship.

There has been a growing tendency to develop services of worship around themes. A catalog of themes which have been used would on the whole make painful reading for one who is looking for a vital connection with life interests and needs of pupils. Most themes have been highly abstract and it is to be doubted whether in the majority of cases pupils have seen the relationship between the worship program and the theme, or between the theme and their own lives. Let the principle of building worship around themes be continued. Let the themes, however, grow out of life experiences, even though this may center our considerations on the seemingly commonplace. Christ may come to the lowliest cottage and may bless the humblest task in which human beings engage.

There is at the present time a tendency to make the worship program somewhat less formal and relate it more closely to the actual experiences of the pupils. This is a step in the direction of making the curriculum life-centered. Mrs. Lina E. Rauschenberg has told the story[22] of an informal service of worship in a Primary Department. It required some quick think-

[22] *International Journal of Religious Education,* April, 1929, pp. 25-26.

ing and replanning on the part of the principal to take advantage of the situation presented.

"Well," said the principal of the department to the reporter, "I have just been putting away the most adorable Chinese picture. I had planned a world friendship program for this morning, but our good friend, Mrs. Beckham, has sent over the loveliest miniature conservatory just for today. I think we would prefer to talk about that and leave my little Chinese girls for next Sunday."

At an appropriate time the conservatory was brought from a corner and a soft but quite audible breath of admiration passed over the children. They were allowed to come close to the table and examine the exhibit of woodland plants and flowers and a natural conversation ensued in which teacher and pupils discussed the way in which flowers grow, leading up to the thought expressed in the verse "He hath made everything beautiful in its time" and that God has made things beautiful because he loves us. Even as he takes care of the flowers so that they will grow and bloom for us in the spring, so we know God loves us and takes care of us too. The group sang "Our Heavenly Father" (from *Carols*) and the conversation closed with the following prayer by the principal: "Thank you, God, for all the beautiful things that grow. Thank you for your care of everything. Thank you for your love for us. Amen."

This is very different from the usual type of departmental worship program. No one would say that it should entirely displace the more formal program. Yet it is unquestionably true that the children in this Primary Department worshipped more genuinely in this informal service than they do in many of the more formal services.

The question is often asked, Will the time come when curricula of worship will be as common as curricula for class instruction? We can but devoutly answer, "God forbid!" True, leaders of worship need more guidance than has usually been given them. The inexperienced leader may do better with a prepared program, even though he little understand why the different items appear in that program, than if left entirely to his own resources. Such materials should, however, be in the form of guides to the leaders through which they may be enabled to develop vital worship experiences in their own groups. Such a guide will help in setting objectives, suggesting materials, and helping the leader in discovering the needs of his own pupils. A few such attempts at building a curriculum of worship have been made.[23] This is by no means the same as providing leaders with set programs which will but stultify their thinking and drive out any true spirit of worship from the congregation of the pupils.

## PROBLEMS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Take a quarterly of the International Uniform or Group lessons and show how you would use it to meet the life-situations of a certain age-group.

2. Make a study of a single prepared course for the age of pupils with whom your work lies. (1) Is it *material* centered, *material-situation* centered, *situation-material* centered, or purely *situation* centered? (2) How does the author seek to make it experience-centered? (3) Write an evaluation of the course in terms of the curriculum principles which have been developed in this book.

3. Study the score card for evaluating textbooks given in chapter xvii of Betts's *Curriculum of Religious Education* and measure the unit selected in problem 2 by this scale.

4. Examine the suggested worship programs in some magazine of religious education. Do they measure up to the ideal suggested in the last section of this chapter?

[23] See for example, Crandall, Edna M., *A Curriculum of Worship for The Junior Church School*, 3 volumes. The Century Co.

5. Suppose you have come to the conviction that your class needs some training in respect for the church. You decide to teach them about the Temple, and the high regard in which it was held by the Jews. Does this make such a learning unit life-centered?

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

Betts, George H., The Curriculum of Religious Education, pp. 337-528. Abingdon Press, 1924.

Bowen, C. A., Lesson Materials in the Church School. Cokesbury Press, 1929.

Carrier, Blanche, "Centering the Lesson in Life," International Journal of Religious Education, May and June, 1929.

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## CHAPTER X

## THE EXPERIMENTAL ATTITUDE

If a modern Solomon were to utter the prayer of his deepest desire, he would do well to add to his petition for an understanding heart a request for an open mind. And if he were to become a teacher in the church school he would need a double portion of this blessing. Styles are constantly changing in teaching religion as in manner of dress. Christian convictions may be the same from age to age, but they must be applied to conditions which are ever new in a changing world. Our purpose with and for children may be the same today as yesterday, but our manner of dealing with children must change with the increase in knowledge of how learning takes place. In the foregoing pages we have tried to interpret the best present-day thinking in its implications for religious teaching. But tomorrow we will laugh at these crude and archaic ideas. And so it should be. Unless tomorrow can lead into nobler and better ways of living and doing our work, it is not a worthy son of today. If we can but serve as a link in that endless chain by which thought moves forward we should be happy because we share in a great mission.

Different persons react in different ways to this onrush of civilization. Some determine to hold fast to the present and to prevent progress by sheer refusal to recognize that a new day is being born. We call them the old fogies and the mossbacks. Others rush away from what *is*, at the slightest beckoning of the hand of what is *to be*, often to find it to have been but a false

signal. We call them the theorists and the cranks. Where then is wisdom to be found, and where is the place of understanding? Blessed is the teacher of the open mind! It is he who will prove all things and hold fast to that which is good. It is he who will be ready to reconstruct his experience to provide for the new light which may break upon the world. It is he who sees ever new and better ways of working. His attitude is that of watchful waiting for what God may still have in store for his world. But in the meantime he has his feet firmly planted on the present. He sees no reason for surrendering his conviction of the worth of the present, simply because he has his face set to the future. He obeys the injunction,

> "Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
> Nor yet the last to lay the old aside."

The constellation of the cardinal virtues of the church school teacher should surely contain one called by the name of the open mind.

### What Is the Experimental Attitude?

He who has the experimental attitude can rise above the thing which he is doing and see its meaning. He can fix his eye on the end to be achieved and manipulate his means to its achievement. He is fertile in imagination and rich in experience, ready to sense the means at his disposal for the accomplishment of his purposes. He is eager toward new and better ways of doing things so long as they give promise to achieve better results. In contrast to him stands the one who also labors but knows little of what it is all about. He makes no distinction between ends and means, and is satisfied so long

as his pupils are engaged about *something*. He follows a certain way of doing things, and when that way fails, is helpless to devise a better way. His mind is tied to the single steps to be taken, and his imagination never takes him soaring to the heights whence the *goal* of effort may be clearly seen and single steps become but incidents in the day's work.

They engage in creative education who can most clearly see the end in view, and be free to find the procedure which will most quickly bring about its achievement. They will follow the most natural method for they will ever seek to think God's thoughts after him, and follow them out as they are written in the very being of the child whom they teach. Verily, the Kingdom will not be far away when we have developed a generation of teachers of religion of this experimental mind and creative impulse.

It is the experimental attitude coupled with the creative impulse which has made all progress possible. Not thirty years ago the "horseless carriage" was a subject for the dreams of the visionary and the jokes of the practical-minded. But two men, Buick and Ford, saw a practical outcome possible, and worked with patience, skill and indomitable courage to find the means which would make possible the achievement of that goal. Today the nation rides in automobiles. The Wright Brothers saw a vision of the possibility of navigating the heavens in a craft that is heavier than air. Their attempts to find a means to this end were satirized by such writings as "Darius Green and His Flying Machine." Yet it was not two decades later that a Lindbergh could fly from New York to Paris.

In the realm of medical science it was Walter Reed who saw the goal of a conquered yellow fever, and in the experimental attitude set out to find the means toward that end. Today scientists are seeing visions of conquering the scourge of cancer. Years of labor have already gone into the experimental work on this great humanitarian undertaking, and the work must still go on. But the search will some day succeed. The right means will be found to achieve the end in view.

In the more homely affairs of everyday life we too succeed in finding better ways of living by keeping an open mind and searching for means that will best accomplish our ends. A child refuses to eat cereal, and the mother must find a way to make this a pleasant undertaking. She tries various things by way of rewards, punishments, inducements, motivations, until finally she discovers the best means for the accomplishment of the goal. Similarily, the problem of picking up blocks, dressing, and caring for pets must be solved. There is no universal rule which applies to all cases. Each must find the way, through experimentation, which will best meet his problem.

Teachers of religion may take a tip from the scientist and the practical mother. Let them approach their task with an open mind and the experimental attitude. Let them fix their goal on the objective to be attained, and find the method and the material through which it may be realized. The greatest liability in religious education is the teacher or leader who has developed the attitude that whatever *is* is best, who is convinced that things ought to go on as they are, who has an idea that his school is the best in the state because he has never seen any other, who if he were convicted of pedagogical sin

against his children would yet maintain "we have always done it that way." It is such as these who must be given a new point of view. They must be fired with a divine discontent with what is, and started on a creative achievement through which new successes may be won.

The enterprising teachers are not so. They have always been seeking after ways to improve their work. They have been looking at this business of teaching with an eye single to active, aggressive achievement, and a mind ready to try and try again to find the best way. They have found pupils disinterested, and have sought through change in method or materials to bring about a better interest until the result was achieved. They have found the room disorderly, and have tried through change in routine, rearrangement of seating, new type of programs, and new disciplinary measures to bring about a better state of affairs. They have found pupils coming irregularly, and have tried exhortation, visits to the home, reminder cards, contests, better programs, as means to remedying this situation. What has been done more rarely is for teachers to fix the attention on certain character goals to be achieved, and then experiment with methods, plans, materials, activities until the best way was found to approach those goals. This is the experimental atttiude to which the new religious education would call every worker.

When the work of teaching is undertaken in this spirit, then the teacher is approaching the scientific method. The chief distinction between common everyday trial and error and the scientific method is the much greater refinement of the latter. The scientist carefully defines and analyzes his problem; he gathers all avail-

able data; he organizes, analyzes and classifies his data; on the basis of his data he formulates a tentative solution to the problem; he tests his solution; if the solution stands the test, he adopts it, if it fails he goes through the same process again, restudying his data, trying other solutions, etc. By such laborious methods has educational progress been made. Sometimes such careful investigation has completely upset previous thinking. Sometimes it has but verified the correctness of what had already been learned by trial and error. The nonscientific, "practical" approach to the solution of problems of religious education must be relied upon in the majority of situations because scientific method is not available. Its value is enhanced to the extent that teachers have developed the experimental attitude and the scientific outlook.

## Measures of Success

When a teacher approaches his work in the experimental attitude, with his mind set on specific objectives to attain, he becomes at once concerned about measures of success by which he may judge the effectiveness of his work. He must know whether his pupils are moving toward the desired goal. One of the remarkable things in the history of the church school is its almost complete freedom from many kinds of examinations or other tests. In most cases it has been assumed that church school pupils will not submit to such testing. Since they attend on a voluntary basis, it is argued, any attempt to check their work would cause them to lose interest and possibly discontinue attendance. That this assumption is wrong has been discovered by almost everyone who has attempted some kind of testing. The experience

usually has been that interest is heightened rather than diminished by tests or examinations.

To say that measures of success for religious teaching are necessary is one thing. To devise the kind of tests which will actually measure religious growth is quite another matter. Some would maintain that religion is something so intangible that it cannot in any sense be stated in quantitative terms. Others insist that whatever exists at all must exist in some quantity which can be measured. Of one thing are we certain, the problem of measurement of success in religious education is difficult. To find out how fast a boy can run, we need but to let him run and take his time with a stop watch. If we want to find out how well he can read, we need only give him selections to read of varying degrees of difficulty. To find out how much he loves God, or his fellow man—well, just how shall we go about that?

Yet in a very real sense we are actually measuring character every day. We form our estimate of the boys and girls in our classes. We speak of our acquaintances as "devout," "good," "irreligious," and "Christian gentleman." Some we would trust with our money, while some we would not. It is true that we are often mistaken in our estimates. But there must be some "symptoms" by which we evaluate character. It would seem, then, that if we could but refine these crude methods for judging character which we now use, we would be on the road toward tests of moral and religious growth.

1. *Imperative need for measurement.*—The final test is life itself. The test of my methods as a gardener is the kind of vegetables which I grow. Similarly, the

final test of a school or a teacher is the kind of men and women who go out from their influence. The test of religious education is whether it produces Christian men and women.

But suppose I use the wrong method with my vegetables? My corn yields only "nubbins" instead of delicious ears. It is then too late to start the process over again and try a different method. I have lost a year from the effective life of my garden. That is not so bad where grocery stores and hucksters carry plenty of vegetables which may be purchased. But suppose as teacher of religion I use the wrong method, but do not discover my mistake until these pupils of mine have grown into manhood and womanhood? They do not produce the fruits of the spirit which we have a right to expect from Christian teaching. It is then too late to begin over again with a different method. My failure has lost to the Kingdom precious human souls of inestimable worth. Thus is it imperative that we have measures whereby we may test our work as we move along from week to week, so that every success may be crowned with renewed effort in that direction, and every failure repaired as quickly as possible. With vegetables this is comparatively easy. I may note their progress from day to day. Even with vegetables, however, I may not dig up the seed to see if it has sprouted or peel off the shucks to see if the ear is forming, without injury to the plant. When it comes to human character, how much harder! But when we think of the importance of the matter concerned, how much more imperative that we have a method whereby we may measure progress.

How shall we measure growth in Christian personality? In one of the scenes of the motion picture en-

titled *A Kiss for Cinderella,* the heroine has a dream that she is in a room together with many other candidates for the high office of becoming the prince's wife, undergoing certain tests to determine their fitness. One is a test of goodness. The girls are shown as having each a long thermometer in her mouth by means of which her goodness is to be measured. The mercury readings indicate not temperature but goodness. Naturally, our heroine comes out in first place with a reading of 99.5°!

If some fairy scientist could devise a thermometer by means of which in this simple manner we could measure moral and religious attainment, this question of character testing would be solved. It would be the most revolutionizing invention that has ever been made. At last we would be able to find out from a simple thermometer reading whether teachers are born or made, whether precept is more effective than example, whether the Bible is the most effective means of religious education, whether graded lessons are better than uniform, whether pageantry has a valuable influence on religious growth, and a thousand other questions which have a vital bearing on religious education.

We must strive to devise some method of measurement if we would reach maximum effectiveness for our work. The movement for building scientific tests of character is an attempt to construct just such "thermometers" to measure moral and spiritual growth. Measurement will probably never be so simple as to enable us to read the results from a scale like that of a thermometer. Christian personality is too complex a matter for that. While this work is going forward teachers will continue, as they have done in all ages, to apply their own

measurements to determine the success of their work. Let us examine a few of these common measures of success, and then look more closely at the movement for scientific measurement of character.

2. *Common-sense measures.*—By common-sense measures we mean the kind of measurement which teachers generally have made, as distinguished from the more scientific measuring instruments. One of the first which occurs to us is the pupil's *interest* in his work, and in religious subjects generally. If he listens attentively, asks intelligent questions, and answers questions with a mark of understanding, we assume that his religious life is growing happily and that our work with him has been well done. A church school which can develop such an interest that it will manifest itself even in the home, will win the eternal praises of every parent for its efficiency and success.

One of the ways in which interest will manifest itself is in *attendance* and *punctuality.* Ask any teacher to rate his pupils on the basis of the effectiveness of his teaching, and the chances are good that he will rate high those who have made the best record in attendance.

As another mark of success, *lesson preparation* will also come in for large consideration. The teacher loves the pupil who may be depended on to do the work assigned and come to class regularly with a prepared lesson.

Almost without exception, church school teachers would rate high as a mark of successful teaching the *Bible knowledge* which the pupil has acquired. Some teachers have had the courage to give their pupils searching examinations on the effectiveness with which the Bible has been learned. Such efforts are good, and it is

to be deplored that not more of this sort of testing has been done. True, the results are often very discouraging. But is it not better to know that our teaching has borne little fruit, than to close our eyes to this fact and go on in the same old way in blissful ignorance? Some teachers, of course, would be little disturbed by the failure of their pupils to give a good account of their biblical knowledge. They would flee to the refuge of the assumption that the heart has been more effective in assimilating scriptural truth than the head. It is, of course, true that many impressions are received in the church school beyond those assimilated from the lesson book. Yet it is a good policy to assume that unless teaching leads to a definite broadening of the horizons of knowledge, it is not very likely to yield much fruit in an extension of the scope and quality of attitudes.

Since the final test of the success of religious education is life, there are good reasons for looking to the daily *conduct* of pupils for evidence of successful teaching. To a certain extent this has always been done by teachers. We have already described how the pupils' interest and responses in the school will influence our judgment of the success which has attended our efforts. Observation of life outside of the school is very difficult, though any teacher will be quick to seize upon every manifestation that his teaching is bearing fruit in conduct. In many ways this natural observation of pupils in home, school, and community, under proper conditions, is one of the best kinds of tests which may be used. Some teachers have sensed the opportunity of keeping a check on conduct-effects through close association with the home. It is the parents who will be

able to sense any effects which the teaching may have had on the child. Some teachers have used the plan of acquainting the parents with what they are trying to accomplish in the school, so that they may be on the lookout for indications of successful influence on conduct. The time will come when it is the common practice to supply three manuals for every course in the church school—one for the pupil, one for the teacher, and one for the parents.

Finally, the supreme test which any teacher will apply is that of whether the child definitely confesses himself as a follower of Christ, and aligns himself with the church. Some of the more critical will go beyond this point and ask whether he becomes an active and efficient member in the church after he joins. This last test is difficult to apply by any individual teacher, because confession of Christ and joining the church is the culmination of the work of many teachers. All may take the credit for the pupils who gloriously pass on this test and all may shift the blame to others for those pupils who fail.

These are some of the common-sense tests which we apply to measure the success of Christian teaching. And they are all valuable tests. Each of them has something to add by way of evidence that teaching is succeeding. The very fact that a teacher is in a sufficiently critical attitude toward his work to inquire concerning its success, is in itself a wholesome sign. He needs must make his judgment on the basis of the best evidence he has of his success.

The criticism to be brought against resting our estimates of success on such tests as these is that they are usually very superficially and uncritically applied.

Christian personality, manifesting itself in Christlike living, is the ultimate result for which we are striving. The tests here described are taken as symptoms of the existence of this ultimate value. We may so easily be mistaken in the interpretation of these symptoms. We can only see the outward signs of the inner purpose and motive, and we may so easily be misled when we judge the *motive* by the *act*. One outstanding good deed may lead us to think that a child has attained nigh unto moral perfection, whereas he may do a hundred other deeds the same day which we would not reckon to him for righteousness. The child who appears to be most interested and alert may at heart be a prig who is currying favor with the teacher. Angelic behavior may be but the result of a pupil's lack of dynamic personality to do what he wants to do, rather than a sign of goodness of motive. The "bad boy" of the class has too often in manhood become the finest example of Christian character to justify our accepting outward symptoms too readily. Character changes come about so gradually and show themselves in such indirect manner that even parents may be unaware of them, or fail to connect them with the influence of the school. The child is constantly immersed in so many influences, that it is difficult to point to life-changes as being the result of a particular class or school.

Yet man needs must continue to form his judgments on the basis of outward symptoms, for only God is able to look directly on our inmost heart and soul and know us as we are.

3. *Scientific measures.*—The contribution of science to the testing of moral and religious growth is that of refining the crude common-sense measures which every-

body is using. Tests which are scientifically constructed try to get closer to measuring the ultimate value for which we are striving and to avoid some of the false interpretations which we so readily make on the basis of inaccurate or insufficient data. As with common-sense measures, scientific tests are dependent on judging what a total personality is by certain signs, or symptoms, or indications. Science goes on the assumption that we may know what a thing is by what it does. Thus with electricity, gravity, and human personality. If you could but get a total description of what a person does in a lifetime, you would have the best estimate which can humanly be made of what that person is.

But we cannot list and describe all that a person does for even a day, much less a lifetime. How then shall we judge what he is? We must get a *sample* of his conduct which is a fair representation of what he would do in all other situations. Is not that the way in which we form all our judgments? If we want to know how good are the apples in a barrel, we taste one to find out. We do not eat the whole barrel. If a boy returns the money given him by mistake in making change, we assume that he is honest as regards money, though we do not observe him in all situations. If a new author writes one excellent book, we look eagerly for the next, assuming that all his writings will be good. Of course, we may be mistaken about the apples because we happened to pick the best one, we are quite sure to be mistaken about the boy if we assume from this one instance that he is honest in all things, and even authors have been known to disappoint us with their subsequent productions.

One of the first considerations in making tests is to build them on samples of conduct which are the surest symptoms of the inner personality. To fail at this point is disastrous. We may assume, for example, that a beautiful golden yellow is a sure symptom of fruit being of fine quality, yet who has not been misled by just such beautiful appearance to set his too eager teeth into an unripe persimmon? We may assume that a knowledge of Scripture is a sure symptom of Christian character, yet who has not been "taken in" by a Scripture-quoting crook? We must first be sure that the symptom or sample of conduct is a sure sign of the existence of the quality which we seek to measure. We have already shown how our common-sense measures may be weak at this point. We are too apt to judge on the basis of insufficient or unreliable data. The testing movement is meeting its greatest difficulties in finding those elements which are infallible indications of the existence of the quality to be measured. What constitutes a good test of Christian personality? When we break personality up into such traits as fair-mindedness, charity, honesty, love, what constitutes a good test of each of these? Taking such a seemingly concrete matter as testing honesty, how may we know how honest a person is? Observations of samples of conduct like that of the boy just mentioned will help, but they are difficult to make. The fact that he is being observed, if he knows it, alters the situation. Just as the apple-grower may put the best apples on top of the barrel if he knows you are going to taste one, so the boy is likely to put his best conduct forward if he knows you are trying to get an estimate of him. With most people there is much difference between their knowledge of what is right

and their practice. To get a true estimate of character we must see conduct under normal conditions, and not simply when virtues are on parade.

This problem of getting valid measures of religious and moral growth is engaging the minds of some of our best scientists. The methods used are too difficult to describe in this book. Nor is it necessary. The general worker in the church school will not be concerned with the construction of such measuring instruments. When they come to him for use, it is to be hoped that they have been thoroughly tested and may be trusted to serve their intended purpose if used according to directions.

4. *What is the value of scientific tests?—a*) They have been carefully prepared to include such elements as have been found to show most truly the existence of the quality to be measured. Particularly is this true when tests are arranged in "batteries" so as to approach the measurement of a trait from several angles.

*b*) They have been tried to make sure that they actually measure the existence of the quality which they purport to measure. They have been tried with many groups to make sure they can be practically applied.

*c*) They have been standardized, that is, they have been used with a large enough number of persons to indicate what scores pupils of different ages should normally make. Thus a teacher may see at once how his group compares with the "norm," that is, with what they should score if they are an average group.

*d*) They are easy to give. Pupils usually enjoy such tests. Teachers need but follow the printed directions.

*e*) They are easy to score. Often the scoring is reduced to a mechanical detail by means of a stencil or other scoring device. The scores are *objective,* that is,

they depend in no sense on the teacher's judgment. Thus the test becomes entirely impartial.

These qualities apply to tests which have been properly perfected to the point where they are released for general use. These considerations make it clear that in fields where they are to be had, standardized, scientific tests have many advantages over the old essay-type examination. In church schools which have not been accustomed to the use of examinations, such tests will be much more easily introduced than the kinds of examinations which teachers are prone to prepare.

## Some Typical Tests

The movement for the development of scientific tests of character is still in its early stages. Few tests have yet been released for general use. Most of the few which have appeared are to be regarded as still in the experimental stage. Some have been withdrawn from circulation after a period of use, presumably because they were found to be unsatisfactory. This discussion is intended more for the purpose of giving the reader a point of view on the matter of measurement than to give specific guidance in what to select and use. It is to be hoped that the near future will witness the publication of many more tests intended for the use of the church school worker with little scientific training.[1]

Tests may be classified either by method of measurement used or by content covered. The method may be that of observation of the person to be tested, either in his normal activities, on in situations into which he may be placed for the purpose of making the test; the hold-

[1]For a list of available tests, see particularly Chapter IV in *Experimentation and Measurement in Religious Education*, by Goodwin B. Watson. Association Press, 1927.

ing of interviews with him according to a specified plan; paper and pencil tests taken by the pupil; and case studies of the person to be tested, in which the attempt is made to record all relevant facts concerning his life and conduct on which may be based a judgment concerning the effectiveness with which he has been taught. Paper and pencil tests have been most frequently used in school work. They may be of the old essay-type examinations, or any one of the more recently developed devices, such as filling blanks in incomplete sentences, giving opposites, marking whether a statement is true or false, checking which of several answers to a question is the correct one (multiple choice). The illustrations which are to follow will show several of these methods.

From the standpoint of the content to be covered in a test, we shall briefly discuss and illustrate six types:

1. *Biblical knowledge tests.*—Knowledge tests are the easiest to construct because they cover such definite fields. Our more recent emphasis on character as over against biblical knowledge has unnecessarily retarded the development of tests in this field. A knowledge of the Bible should be one of the outcomes of religious education, and without question the learning of the Bible could be greatly speeded up through a proper use of such tests. To a certain extent growth in Bible knowledge may be expected to be accompanied with growth in Christian character, but the findings concerning this relationship show the need for great caution in interpreting scores on Bible knowledge tests as indications of character growth.

Of course no test can be devised which will reveal a child's total knowledge of the Bible. We must again work on the basis of *sampling.* We must select such

items of Bible information for our test that the score the pupil makes will represent in a fair way the score he would have made if he had been asked a thousand or more questions dealing with other items of Bible information. Is it possible within the limits of one test thus to sample fairly a pupil's knowledge of the Bible? At first glance it would seem impossible. Actually, however, it has been proved that by wise selection of elements it is possible to sample a pupil's knowledge of a subject fairly well in one test.

Three examples will serve to illustrate this type of test. *The Laycock Test of Biblical Information*[2] is arranged by seven sections, and contains a total of 100 test items. It is designed for use with pupils twelve years of age and over. A few sample items will show how the test is built.[3]

Draw a line under the one word that makes the sentence true.

Jesus was a
Greek, Egyptian, Jew, Roman.

In the following questions several passages from the Bible are indicated. One of the four lines under each heading is taken from the passage. The other three are not. Put a cross opposite the correct one.

The Lord's Prayer contains:

1. Ask and ye shall receive.
2. Thy kingdom come.
3. Lord, increase our faith.
4. Create in me a clean heart, O God.

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[2]Laycock, S. R., University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

[3]In the illustrations which are to follow, only a few elements from each test are given. The reader is cautioned not to form a judgment of the test as a whole from the few elements presented. Our sole purpose is to show how such instruments are constructed. Also, the scoring of tests is such a technical matter that we do not attempt to discuss it. No judgment should be passed on the value of the questions reproduced from existing tests without adequate knowledge of why each question is included, and how it is to be scored.

If what a sentence says is true draw line under the word "True." If what a sentence says is false, draw a line under the word "False."

1. Paul led the Children of Israel out of Egypt.
   ----------True False
2. Jesus visited the Temple when twelve years old.
   ----------True False

The tests entitled *Sunday School Examination A*[4] and *Church School Examination Alpha*[5] cover the same content, but each uses a different form of question. The first uses the true-false question and the second the "best answer" or multiple choice question. There are two forms of each of the tests, each covering about the same range of subject-matter and being of approximately the same difficulty. By the use of these two forms, separated by an interval of time, the progress made by the pupils during that time can be measured. The tests contain twenty-five factual questions on the New Testament, twenty-five on the Old Testament, and twenty-five questions on Christian Ethics. Standard scores are given for pupils of different ages. The tests are intended for use with children ten years of age and older. Here are a few sample questions:

SUNDAY SCHOOL EXAMINATION A. FORM 1

On the following three pages are seventy-five statements about the New and Old Testaments and about moral questions. About half of them are true and the remainder are not true. Read each statement carefully and if you think it is true draw a line under the word "True" to the right of it, but if you think it is false, draw a line under the word "False" to the right of it.

[4]Giles, J. T. Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, Philadelphia.

[5]Hanson, W. L. Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, Philadelphia.

Christ was born in Jerusalem_____True False
Judas pretended to love Jesus but showed by his acts that he loved money more_____True False
Joshua was the leader of the Israelites after the death of Moses _____True False
David was the first king of Israel_____True False

CHURCH SCHOOL EXAMINATION ALPHA, FORM 1

Immediately following each incomplete sentence are four possible answers. Read the incomplete sentence and the four answers carefully. Choose the one answer which makes the *truest* or *best statement* and place an X in front of this answer.

Judas pretended to love Jesus but showed by his acts that he had more love for
_____his country.
_____sinners.
_____money.
_____the Pharisees.

The first king of Israel was
_____David.
_____Solomon.
_____Jonathan.
_____Saul.

Ruth and Naomi were
_____sisters.
_____cousins.
_____daughter-in-law and mother-in-law.
_____daughter and mother.

The School of Education, Northwestern University has also developed a series of test of Bible knowledge, one on the Life and Teachings of Jesus, one on the Old Testament Times and Teachings, and one on the Acts and Epistles.

2. *Tests of moral knowledge and judgment.*—Right knowledge is an important element in right conduct. Tests dealing with moral knowledge and ethical judg-

ment are important because they reveal the pupil's mental content on moral questions. If knowledge is faulty or incorrect, the teacher has a chance to center his teaching where it is most needed. The danger in this type of test lies in our tendency to assume that the pupil will act according to his best knowledge. Even when asked what he would do in a certain situation, his reply is likely to be more influenced by what he thinks the teacher wants him to say than by any due consideration of what he really would do if confronted with such a situation.

As examples of this type of test we shall reproduce sample questions from two existing tests. The first is from *Church School Examination Alpha, Form 2,* already described above:

Immediately following each incomplete sentence are four possible answers. Read the incomplete sentence and the four answers carefully. Choose the one answer which makes the *truest* or *best statement* and place an X in front of this answer.

When some wrong has been done, we should
_____talk a great deal about the wickedness of the act and the person who did it.
_____have nothing to do with the person who did the wrong.
_____overlook the act if the person is wealthy and influential.
_____hate the act but not the person who does it.

We commit a sin only when
_____we knowingly choose the wrong.
_____our wrong acts are found out.
_____we break one of the Ten Commandments.
_____we try to have a good time.

The second illustration is taken from a test now out of print:[6]

[6]Watson, Goodwin B., *Test of Ethical Judgment,* Union Theological Seminary, New York City.

A girl buys a new dress at a very reasonable price but soon learns that it was produced under terrible sweat shop conditions. Read each of the questions below and if you think the best answer is yes, draw a line around the word YES. If you think the best answer is no, draw a line around the word NO.

1. Should she return the dress and say nothing?_____Yes No
2. Should she report this to the police?_____Yes No
3. Should she start an educational crusade among her friends against such conditions?_____Yes No
4. Should she write a letter to her Congressman?_____Yes No
5. Should she do nothing this time, but resolve never to buy at that place again?_____Yes No
6. Should she go to the proprietor, protest, and demand her money back_____Yes No

3. *Tests of religious ideas.*—Religious ideas play an important part in conduct. If we know the religious ideas held by our pupils, it becomes possible to encourage those which are right and to correct those which are wrong. A lack of adequate religious conceptions should lead to learning enterprises through which the pupil may be led to think himself to clearness on some of the fundamental Christian concepts.

The first example is taken from a test which has been practically used but which is now out of print:[7]

IV. Below are listed several reasons why some people feel that Jesus should be given our allegiance—why we should claim him as Lord, as Master, as Son of God, and as our Savior. Read each, and if you think it is a strong, important reason for giving him this loyal allegiance, draw a line around the word STRONG. If you think it is a weak, or less important reason, draw a line around the word WEAK

1. Because he is reported to have been born of a virgin_____Strong Weak
2. Because he always lived unselfishly_____Strong Weak

[7]Watson, Goodwin B., *Test of Religious Ideas*, Union Theological Seminary, New York City.

3. Because miraculous events are reported to have taken place on the night of his birth_____Strong Weak
4. Because he came from a devout but poor home__Strong Weak
5. Because he had power to heal many forms of sickness_____Strong Weak
6. Because his teaching represents the highest ideal we know for the life of men_____Strong Weak
7. Because the church has long believed that he gave his blood as a sacrifice for our sins_____Strong Weak
8. Because those who knew him best, could not think of him as less than Son of God_____Strong Weak
9. Because he claimed to be the Messiah_____Strong Weak
10. Because he is reported to have raised the dead___Strong Weak
11. Because he is reported to have calmed the waves__Strong Weak
12. Because all he did and said was moved by a spirit of real love_____Strong Weak

The School of Education of Northwestern University[8] has issued a series of "Comprehension Tests" on (1) The Life and Teachings of Jesus, (2) The Old Testament, and (3) The Acts and Epistles. The following elements are reproduced from the first of these:

If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me (Luke 9:23). THIS MEANS

_____1. Every one should wear a symbol of the cross if they would be true followers of Christ.
_____2. The Christian life is one of constant self-denial.
_____3. There is a daily trial or affliction for every Christian.
_____4. A follower of Christ constantly must be willing to endure necessary suffering and self-sacrifice.

Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you (Luke 6:27, 28). THIS MEANS

_____1. We should pray for those that cause us harm.

[8]Address George H. Betts, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill. See also his instrument for recording religious beliefs, for use with adults.

------2. We should have good will to all persons regardless of what they do to us.

------3. We should bestow choice blessings on those that hate us.

------4. We should love our enemies in the same way we love our friends.

4. *Attitudes tests.*—Attitudes are important determiners of conduct. If we know what a person's attitudes are on a given question, we may pretty well predict how he will act. To find out what the attitudes of one's pupils are is, therefore, a very important step in good teaching. The measurement of attitudes is exceedingly difficult because of the problem involved in expressing a matter so intangible in terms of quantity. An example will help us to visualize what tests of this kind are like.

To accompany the course *How Big Is Your World?*[9] a test[10] is being prepared to indicate the attitudes of the class on world relations. It is intended to be used before the course is undertaken, and again after it is completed, to show the "shift" in attitudes which the course has brought about. There are 50 questions of which a few are quoted by way of illustration:

How to Proceed

1) The statements below are about people and various relations we might have with them. Some of the statements you will agree with very definitely, some of them you will disagree with quite positively, others you will feel some uncertainty as to the attitude expressed.

2) Read each statement twice carefully. Think what it means,

[9]See note, page 205.

[10]Attitudes Test on World Relations, prepared by E. J. Chave in co-operation with the Bureau of Research of the International Council of Religious Education.

then put next the number of the statement a letter to show how you feel about the statement, as follows:

T if you are very sure the statement is *true.*

PT if you feel it is true in a large degree, or *probably true* as far as your experience goes.

U if you are quite uncertain, or if you think it might sometimes be true and sometimes false.

PF if you think it is false in a large degree, more false than true, is *probably false* as far as your experience goes.

F if you are very sure the statement is *false.*

1. We can help the world best by making America first in everything.
5. The average negro is mentally as capable of education as the average white.
9. War to protect smaller nations against larger ones is a sacred duty.
11. It is God's purpose that some races should remain subordinate to others.
20. We should keep the denominational distinctions in missionary work as we have in the United States.
25. There is nothing in non-Christian religions that is worthy of being preserved.
45. Missionaries in foreign countries should not depend upon the protection of the military forces of their governments.
46. There are distinct movements on the part of followers of non-Christian religions to work for peace and against war.

5. *Conduct tests.*—In this type of test, the concern is not with what a person *knows* about right and wrong, or what he *thinks* ought to be done in a particular situation, but what does he actually *do.* At first glance we would say, "Ah! at last we have arrived at the real thing!" But lest our enthusiasm be too quickly kindled for this method, let us pause to point out some of its difficulties. (1) How are we to get a large number of responses in test situations without the pupil's suspecting that he is being tested? (2) How are we going to be sure what rating to give a pupil for an act, when we

can see only what is done and have no way of knowing what the inner motive may be? If two men each give five dollars to the church, but the one does it for love of the Kingdom while the other does it because it is good for his business, shall we give them both the same rating? These difficulties must be overcome before this type of test is practical. Eventually it will probably find a considerable place in our schemes for testing character. At the same time it must be admitted that we shall have to continue to rely on tests of factors through which we may *predict* actual conduct, such as tests of knowledge and attitudes, in large areas where we cannot test actual conduct under normal conditions.

The most extensive work in this field of conduct tests has been done by the Character Education Inquiry, under the direction of Professors Hartshorne and May. An illustration will show how the difficulties involved in this type of test were met and real test conditions produced:

*The Mystery Man.*—The children are in a circle facing in. The Mystery Man passes around in back and places in each child's hand an object (or a piece of money) which the child is to identify without looking at. When he thinks he knows what it is he goes to one of the helpers and reports. The helper then looks at the object, shows it to the child, and records whether or not he guessed right. The child is then told to take the object to a box in another room where all the objects are being collected to be used again. . . . As the box is in another room, it is perfectly possible for a child not to show up with the objects at all, but to start for the room and when out of sight slip the coin or object or both into his pocket or dress. But some will not do this, and so the box is so arranged that, even if one comes to it, provided he has two objects to deposit, there is no apparent way by which anyone will know whether he drops in both or only one. The box is solid toward the child with only a small slit through which he is to pass the objects. A

helper sits near the box, with a sheet of paper on which he checks or records the number or name of each child as he comes to the box. But the box is open on the side toward the helper so he can see what is dropped in and make a cryptic note of it on his paper opposite the child's name or number.[11]

6. *A pupil-rating plan.*—Strictly speaking this cannot be called a test in the true sense of the word. Various schemes have been devised for the measurement of character through the use of rating scales. Sometimes these ratings are made by the pupil only, sometimes by the teacher only, and sometimes by pupil and teacher working co-operatively. A rating scale does not provide an objective measure, but it does help to refine individual judgment. When used co-operatively by teacher and pupil, through a series of interviews, and leading to a program for meeting the needs revealed by the scale, it has undoubted value. The *Christian Quest* pamphlet referred to on page 82 contains a good example of a rating scale.

## How Measurements Affect the Curriculum

There is a common conception that tests are to be *given* by teachers and *taken* by pupils. That is, the pupil is to be tested. But is it the pupil only? Suppose a pupil is found to have made no progress in Bible knowledge after a six-months period of study. What are the implications for the teacher? Tests work both ways. While they are given for the sake of improving the achievement of pupils, they just as surely serve as tests of the teacher also, by showing the success of his work, and indicating the points at which improvement is needed.

[11]Hartshorne and May, *Studies in Deceit.* Macmillan Company, 1928, pp. 88-89. Used by permission.

We may distinguish at least four values of measurements in education:

1. *Diagnosis.*—Measurements are not of value simply to show how well a pupil has done his work. They are just as valuable as indicators of the work he ought to do. For this purpose they must be applied *before* instead of after teaching. This is like a doctor's diagnosis. It provides us with the facts concerning the present ability, knowledge, and character of a pupil on which our program of religious education may be based. Suppose for example that a teacher of Intermediates is trying to determine whether some such course as *How Big Is Your World?* would meet a need with his group. By means of the test to accompany this unit he can find out the present world-friendship attitudes of his group. Incidentally, such a test would more than likely raise discussion and develop an interest which would provide for a natural leading-in to the unit itself. Diagnosis is not simply to enable the teacher to prescribe a course of work. The pupil should be encouraged to use the results of such tests for self-examination, leading to purposive effort toward improvement.

2. *Organization and emphasis.*—An examination requires a pupil to utilize the knowledge, attitudes, and skills which have come to him from his course, and thus provides an occasion for re-thinking and organization. The essay-type of examination is of greatest value from this standpoint. Every student has experienced the new mastery over a subject attained as a result of a normal and systematic preparation for an examination. The most intensive use of this form of examination is in the comprehensive examinations required by most universi-

ties of candidates for the doctorate. The purpose of such examinations is to encourage students in preparation for them to make an adequate organization of their learnings, and to demonstrate in the taking of them that they have mastered each field. Examinations also serve to *emphasize* the elements on which questions are asked. If these are held to the important matters, a student is enabled to see them in this perspective.

3. *A guide to proper method and material.*—Measurements are essential in any kind of experimental work. Progress in religious education is greatly retarded today because we have no satisfactory measures of growth in Christian personality. Once give us an instrument by which we may measure increase toward the goals of religious education, and we are in a position to vary method and materials at will until we have found just that combination which will produce the best results.

But fortunately this value does not need to await the ultimate perfection of tests. Any worker with an alert mind and with a clear concept of desirable achievement will be able by common-sense measures to make a check on pupil progress, and determine whether one way of working is better than another. If his outcomes are unsatisfactory, he will search for improvements in his method and material until better results are effected.

4. *Measures of achievement.*—We do want to know when a pupil has "arrived" and is ready for other units of learning. The successful achievement of desired goals is the end toward which teaching moves. The more true our measure of the trait which we are seeking to develop, the better will we be able to know whether our work has borne fruit. In a sense, of course, all tests are tests of ability to achieve. It is the ability

revealed by a test which makes possible a diagnosis of needs, and guidance to method and materials. On the whole, however, the purpose of examinations has been largely limited to furnishing a basis for the assignment of grades, and any guidance for future procedure which may have grown out of them has been a by-product.

It is hoped that the testing movement will yield a battery of tests by means of which Christian personality may be measured with a fair degree of success. Should this happen, we would be in a position to test the value of any element in a curriculum. In the meantime, curricula must be built on the basis of the best knowledge and experience available, and subjected to the best tests which we have.

The preparation of measuring instruments to accompany specific curriculum units represents a promising development. A curriculum unit which is to be prepared and printed marks out a certain area of experience which can be covered with a test. The test to accompany the unit *How Big Is Your World?* is an illustration of this type. By means of such a test a teacher is enabled to determine the present ability of his pupils in the field to be covered by the unit. The test itself may serve as an interest starter to lead the group into the unit. If it is so built as to make possible giving it again after an interval of time, it will serve as a measure of success at the end of the unit. Comparison of the initial score with the final score on the test will show what pupil changes resulted from the course.

### Some Precautions

As it is possible to misuse any good thing, so also with tests and measurements. Just at the present time the testing movement is popular, and many workers in reli-

gious education are attempting the use of tests without due consideration of what is involved. A few cautions in the use and interpretation of tests may well be noted.

1. *Tests should adequately represent the objectives.*—It is hardest to build tests which will measure the more subtle elements of religious growth but which, nevertheless, are the things on which we place greatest value. It is natural that tests should first appear on those elements which are most easily measured. The fact that such tests are available is likely to mislead teachers to an undue emphasis on such elements. For example, tests on Bible knowledge are easy to apply and easy to score. If a school should adopt a comprehensive plan of testing Bible knowledge of pupils, the result might easily be that teachers would make it their primary purpose to drill on Bible knowledge, and neglect some weightier matters of character growth.

2. *Tests should not be interpreted as proving more than their contents justify.*—We have already indicated how difficult it is to find concrete elements on which to base a test of such an intangible thing as Christian personality. One of the first questions which we must always bear in mind is, Just what does the test measure? A pupil's score on a test of moral knowledge shows his ability in interpreting the meaning of such moral problems in terms of right conduct. It does not by any means prove that he will act in the light of his best knowledge in such situations. It is a good thing to get an estimate of a pupil's Bible knowledge, and his knowledge of what is right and wrong. It is not a good thing, however, to make the broad assumption that every pupil who ranks well on such tests has by virtue of such ability attained the finest development of Christian character.

3. *Allowance should be made for individual differences.*—Pupils differ in their abilities. A test on which it may be easy for one child to score 90 may for another child be too difficult for him to score even 70. Caution must be exercised in comparing these two children. Each should be encouraged to do his very best, and each should be enabled to have some sense of success when he has done his best. Most of our systems of testing are built on the principle that all must be measured by the achievement of the best few. We have exalted those who make the best grades on the assumption that all could do equally well if they but tried. Yet we know that learning will best take place when the pupil may have some sense of successful achievement. If the pupil is to find joy in his work, his own best effort should yield a sense of success. This sense of success cannot result when only the brightest pupils in the class are set up as models and all others exhorted to be like them.

4. *Scientific, standard tests can be prepared only by technically trained experts, and should be used only by persons who have received special training in such use.* Enough has been said to indicate that the making of tests is a highly technical procedure. Moreover, a delicate instrument requires careful use. Perhaps the time will never come when everyone in a church school will be able to give standard tests satisfactorily. The person who is to supervise testing should have some careful preparation for this purpose. Most church schools will have one or more persons whose education and interests are such that with a little study and training they can be made available for supervising the testing work of the school.

## Conclusion

We must remind the reader that there are as yet only a few standard tests and other instruments of measurement available for general church school use. We take courage, however, in the hope that the movement which is so well begun is but the dawning of the day when scientific tests for use in the church school will be produced in greater abundance. The discussion in this chapter has been offered for two reasons, *first,* to emphasize the importance of *some* type of measurement of achievement in any use of a curriculum, *second,* to encourage church school workers in the use of such measuring instruments as are available and to prepare them for the coming of the new day when the use of such instruments will form a larger part of our church school work. We have called the chapter "The Experimental Attitude" because it has been our desire to bring the reader to the point of view that he himself is an important factor in the creation of a curriculum of religious education. On the one hand, he must visualize adequate objectives as the goal of his work. On the other hand, he must develop the method and materials through which these objectives may be attained. As he is moving toward the goal of these objectives, he must constantly check his results by the best measuring instruments which he can secure or devise.

### PROBLEMS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. If lesson courses are thoroughly tested before they are printed, is it necessary to insist on "the experimental attitude" on the part of local teachers?
2. In how far will situation-reports such as we discussed in Chapter IV serve as a measurement of the results of teaching in actual conduct?
3. Suppose you are conducting a unit work on The Church with a class of Juniors. What tests would you apply to measure its success?

4. Give an illustration from your experience showing how you had a definite goal in view for an individual, a class, or a department, such as getting better lesson preparation; and by experimenting with various means, you finally found the right way.

5. Try out one of the tests described in the foregoing pages with a class or department, and make a note of all the values which you feel resulted therefrom.

6. Suggest a workable program for the use of standard tests in your church school.

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

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## CHAPTER XI

## WHO SHALL MAKE THE CURRICULUM?

The curriculum is a living thing. Just as experience is ever new, active, and ongoing, so the curriculum, which is experience under guidance, must never be a dead, lifeless matter, but must ever be alive and growing. It cannot be made for all by one educational genius. A curriculum must be a giant co-operative endeavor if it is in any true sense to meet the needs of growing life.

### A Shared Enterprise

Who shall share in the making of the curriculum?

1. *The pupil.*—We have too long thought of the pupil as the consumer of what adult leaders produced. A curriculum built on life experience places the child in the midst. It recognizes him as the ultimate curriculum-maker.

It is *his* experience which is undergoing guidance and control through the curriculum. Whatever else may be said, the final point about which all curriculum plans must revolve is the experience of the learner. Thus does the learner become the ultimate curriculum-maker.

It is *his* life values which are visioned as the objectives of religious education. The ends for which the curriculum is organized have no meaning apart from desirable outcomes in the life of the learner. Thus does he determine the ultimate purpose of the curriculum.

It is *his* purposes, and *his* activity for the realization of these purposes, through which learning takes place.

Nothing can be learned *for* him. It is through *self*-activity that the pupil achieves his life purposes. We have accepted the principle of "indigenous" curricula for mission lands. Let us apply that principle also to the making of curricula for the boys and girls of our own local churches.

2. *The teacher.*—There is a certain responsibility which attends the greater experience of maturity. We expect adults to have a worthy experience to share with those who are less mature. So teachers are placed with groups of pupils to share their experience, and by virtue of their greater maturity, to give a certain leadership to the development of that experience.

The teacher shares in the development of the curriculum through *selecting* for educational use those situations which are richest in possibilities for life-changing. He must ever be on the alert for that understanding of his pupils, their situations, problems, interests and needs, which will enable him to sense the values for life enrichment which may emerge as a curriculum.

Not only does the teacher select from the many and varied situations of his pupils those which have greatest worth for the enrichment of his life, he also *initiates* such experiences as may not be provided by the normal situations of the child. This setting of the stage is a very important part of curriculum making. Having weighed the needs of his pupils in the light of the objectives of religious education, he is then in a position to conceive the activities which will best serve to meet those needs.

The teacher serves as *guide to the method and source-materials* of the curriculum. It may at times be that even the teacher does not have at hand the data required

for the carrying out of an enterprise of thought or deed, but we look to him nevertheless to suggest the *method of attack* for such problems, through which he may share with his pupils in gaining greater control of experience. Thus does the teacher serve as a mediator and guide to the source materials and the technique through which a curriculum seeks to enrich life-experience.

The teacher makes the *contact between the pupil and the general curriculum-making body.* Thus does he serve to help the former to derive all that such an agency has to offer, and the latter to keep its vital contact with those whom it serves.

3. *The church school executive.*—This may be either the responsible board of the church through which the curriculum is administered, or the executive head of the church school and his departmental staff,—usually both. The executive must *interpret the life of the community* and its religious needs, and build a program of religious education accordingly. He must see the task of religious education steadily and see it whole, so that each class and department in the school may work at maximum advantage. He must correctly interpret the life of the church and its purposes, for his task is to build a school which is not simply in the church, but also of, by, and for the church.

The *life of the school,* in its activities, discipline, organization, and general spirit constitutes an educative factor which must be rated high in the curriculum of religious education. The executive of the church school is responsible for developing a wholesome life in the school.

It is the general executive who is responsible for the *selection, training, and supervision of the teaching staff*

of the school. This in itself constitutes an educational task of first magnitude, which requires constant attention to the curriculum for leadership. Moreover, the executive must lead the teachers in entering creatively into the process of education, as they share with the pupils the development of the experience of the curriculum. It is the executive who is responsible for educational results, and to this end he must take a large share in the making of a curriculum which will yield such results. Through measurements of progress properly administered, he not only helps the teachers to see how successful their curriculum ventures are, but also helps to show them the very need in pupil-experience out of which curricula must grow.

The church school executive must take responsibility for a *comprehensive curriculum policy and plan,* within which each worker in the school may find his place. Such a comprehensive plan should reveal to a teacher the desirability of and need for pupil study, the place for and the development of activities, and the use of available materials to make an effective curriculum. It should reveal the previous progress of his pupils through carefully kept records. It should enable him to see in a comprehensive way the school's purpose with each individual pupil in his group, and the particular part of that purpose which may be undertaken within a given block of time.

Points of *special emphasis,* if they are to be most fruitful, must constitute a part of a total school policy. Such, for example, are the school's curriculum of missionary education, education in giving, education in the meaning of special days and seasons. Individual teachers and leaders will do something toward such

special emphases, but the only way to make them an important part of the program of the school is to have the general executive see to it that they are effectively observed throughout the school. This is an important phase of curriculum making.

The general executive of the church school must lead his workers in deciding on the particular *prepared curriculum materials* which are to be used. Recognizing the large place held in any curriculum by the prepared lesson materials which are in use, this matter of providing materials becomes an important item in the making of a curriculum in the local church. Purchasing and distributing these materials, providing reference materials, pictures, magazines, and other supplies, filing and storing them so as to be available with maximum facility, are important items in curriculum making for which the executive must bear primary responsibility.

4. *The publisher.*—The publisher must undertake to *make available* in inexpensive form, and in an attractive way, the materials needed in the development of the curriculum. Let no one think that our emphasis on the curriculum as experience is going to make us less dependent on the printed page for the development of our work. Reading is one of the major activities of everyday life, and it will continue to hold an important place as a school activity. Not *less* reading, but reading with a more constructive *purpose* should be our ideal in the church school. It is the publisher who makes lesson materials available so that everyone may possess them.

An experience-centered curriculum makes obsolete the method of supplying lesson materials by means of a single pamphlet. Life experience is rich and varied, and one may never know what direction the development of an experience curriculum is going to take.

Therefore the teacher in the new curriculum needs a great *variety of materials,* made available in readily accessible form. It is the publisher who must be ever on the alert for that which is good, and who must take responsibility for making it available for use in the curriculum which the local worker may develop.

One of the most difficult things about the development of an experience curriculum is to *keep materials up-to-date.* Most books are out of date as soon as they are printed. It is not financially profitable to issue new materials constantly, and withdraw the old. Yet this is a share in curriculum making for which we must look to the publisher. The highest development of the religious life of growing boys and girls must stand ahead of considerations of dollars and cents.

When materials have been produced, they must be efficiently *distributed* to the consumer. The distributing agent of the publisher carries an important share in curriculum making, for he brings the available materials to the attention of the ultimate user. It is unfortunately true that many teachers are doing less than their best because they do not know of the availability of the best materials; that pupils are not having the richest experience from their reading and study because they have not been brought in contact with the best. Interdenominational co-operation in announcement and distribution will do much toward making the best of each the property of all. Thus may the publisher share most fully in curriculum making.

5. *The lesson writer.*—In the new type of curriculum the place of the lesson writer is much different from what it was in the old when he prepared the finished

product for consumption in the class. But lesson writers who prepare course-plans are just as much needed as ever. What is their particular contribution to the making of a curriculum?

In the first place, the lesson writer must help the local leader and the pupils to *visualize the area of experience* which is covered by a particular course-unit. He must help them to discover needs, initiate activities, utilize sources, and vision achievement. From the vantage point of one who shares in the building of a total plan for religious education, he must assist in giving to the local leader a vision of the part which he is to have in this process.

The lesson writer can but anticipate what the experience and needs of a local group will be. It is on the basis of such assumption that he prepares the material of his course. He must give the teacher an idea of what the objective of the material is, and then lead him in *discovering the needs* of his own local group. He must suggest ways of *guiding experience* toward the desired outcomes, the *appropriate activities* to utilize, *enterprises* to initiate, *subject-matter* to use, and *tests* to apply. All of this is done from the standpoint, not of making a course *for* the teacher, but of providing the materials out of which the teacher may share with his pupils in developing their own course in accordance with their needs and interests. He must not only make it easy to translate prepared courses into living enterprises, he must as nearly as he can, prevent their being anything else. He must see clearly that a prepared course is but a guide to curriculum, and not a curriculum, and he must bring the local leader to this same point of view. He must stimulate activity and give

such help as will lead it into the most fruitful development, but he must avoid stultifying thinking by enslaving the mind of this worker.

The lesson writer must help the teacher in *locating the sources* through which guidance and enrichment may be brought about in the unit of experience under consideration. Some of these source materials he will prepare and print in the manual, some he will refer to with a suggestion as to where they may be found, some will be of such local and current nature that he can but guide the teacher in discovering them for himself.

The lesson writer's share of the task of curricula making includes the task of *testing that which he recommends.* This he may either do himself, or he may utilize the test results of others. He owes it to the teacher, in recommending activities, procedures, and materials, in so doing to say, "I know that this worked in one or more groups. Under such and such circumstances it ought to work in yours."

6. *The general curriculum committee.*—By this we mean the denominational and interdenominational boards or committees on curriculum, which are charged with responsibility to initiate curriculum work looking to the publication of courses for local school use, and under whose direction such work is carried out.

Such a committee must *interpret religious education* and embody what it conceives to be the major objective of religious education in its curriculum plans. It must interpret life, and decide what are the great social and personal issues on which Christian people need guidance. In the case of a denominational committee, it must interpret the particular mission and message of its denomination and embody that in its curriculum plan.

To carry out such a comprehensive task, this committee *utilizes the work of research.* It employs research to help determine life needs, to discover how those needs may best be met, to determine how learning best takes place. It surveys the ends of the earth to find successful practice everywhere, organizes, systematizes, evaluates, and then places at the disposal of its local workers the riches of experience which the human race has produced.

On the basis of a comprehensive study, and a careful interpretation of objectives, the curriculum committee *builds a comprehensive plan,* a blue print, showing how the many units of experience in the curriculum may emerge, and giving meaning to each in terms of the whole enterprise. Only thus may chaos and confusion be avoided, and the worthy efforts of all find a most useful response in meeting life needs.

These six persons, groups, or agencies must share the task of curriculum making. Each has his own place of importance. Each needs the other if the total task is to come to fruition. The whole process is a gigantic project, purposeful, problematical, moving forward under the dynamic of rendering the greatest service to the human race, and making progress as rapidly and as effectively as each member in the shared enterprise is able to make his own contribution.

## An Ongoing Process

We use freely such words as "arrive," "achieve," "attain." Yet no living thing may reach a point in perfection as an ultimate goal, and remain alive. Life is dynamic, moving. It is forever in process of becoming. So with the curriculum of religious education. Its essential nature is experience, and experience can never be limited to a static state of being.

Some have lamented the fact that there is constant change. Yet change is the essential condition for growth. We should rejoice in the fact that each new achievement in the making and use of a curriculum is but a step, and usually a necessary step, to something better which is yet to be. We may today embody our best knowledge and our highest ideals concerning religious education in a curriculum, but the very act of so doing leads us into a better control of the factors involved and sets the stage for a new development which makes out of date what we have but just completed.

In no true sense may we speak therefore of *the* curriculum, at least not if we mean by it a particular curriculum plan which has been worked out. There must be curricula—many of them. What may be ideal in one situation may be impossible to use in another. Let us welcome, then, every creative endeavor through which the best educational ideals are embodied in a curriculum. Let us welcome the publication of numerous curriculum plans. But let us grant to each teacher and leader in religious education that inalienable right to use that which best meets the needs of those whom he must lead, as he has discovered them through careful study and has accepted his responsibility for them in the presence of God. Let no effort be spared in helping that great multitude of people who are the teachers of our children, in making curricula which will truly center in experience and lift that experience to a quality which is worthy of children of the Father.

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